



*The* HAPPY  
ISLANDS  
*Stories and Sketches of the Georgian*  
*Bay - by* MARLOW A. SHAW

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# THE HAPPY ISLANDS

STORIES AND SKETCHES OF THE  
GEORGIAN BAY









"THE GEORGIAN BAY  
FACES WEST"



# THE HAPPY ISLANDS

STORIES AND SKETCHES OF THE  
GEORGIAN BAY

BY  
MARLOW A. SHAW



DECORATIONS BY THOREAU MACDONALD

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TO MY COMPANIONS

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## FOREWORD

**T**HESE sketches and stories are for the most part about the Georgian Bay proper. Only a small portion, this Georgian Bay is, of America's noble heritage, the great clear-water lakes, but it is by far the most beautiful. Its eastern and northern shores are lined with thousands of islands. They are of lichened gray granite, touched more or less liberally with foliage, and set in the clearest of water; they lay hold on those who know them with a rare and powerful loveliness.

In and out among these islands, up and down that hundred-mile way, I have gone many times with only the thin canoe and tent between me and whatever the region had to reveal. I know its moods; I have seen close up its beauty and its terror; and one need not read far in this book to infer that its stern bleak shore has an unwavering attraction for me.

Frailest of all crafts in which frail man ever set forth upon the waters of the world, the canoe is yet the one nearest perfection. It has long been a familiar sight among the islands of the Georgian Bay. Champlain and the Fathers used it long ago on these waters; long ago the fur trade sent canoes by hundreds up this initial stage of the far journey to Quebec.

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*Since these early days other boats have come, but they have not displaced the canoe.. Gone almost entirely its value in commerce and exploration, but it is still a perennial source of pleasure. Indeed the attractions of a canoe are and always must have been other than material ones. Youth and romance are its most intimate associations. This "boat, twin-sister of the crescent-moon" has actual charm: it is small and delicate and beautiful; and it seems eminently fitting that in these sketches of high summer among the islands of the Georgian Bay the canoe should appear in almost every part.*

*These sketches arise mostly out of the incidents of a day, or even of an hour in my voyagings. My hope is that their presentation may convey a better understanding of the spirit of this alluring region and a fuller recognition of the beauties of its waters, its rocks and woods, its skies, and its nourishing streams; and that through them may be caught a stronger sense of fellowship with all those who inhabit or frequent that great outdoor playground.*



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# *The Happy Islands*





## CHAPTER I

### AT MOOSE DEER POINT

**I**N spite of the wind, by creeping behind islands and dashing across partly exposed places, I had by three o'clock worked out, on the trip up, to the last cover before the long open stretch known as Moose Deer Point. Here I perforce must stay. Save for the high wind, it was a superb afternoon. Where I pulled up the canoe it was almost perfect calm; fifty yards over the narrow, high-backed island, the wind tossed the pine tops and rolled waves against the shore with a great noise.

I made my way by ridges of rock to where I could take the direction to Moose Point proper, five or six miles north across the white-capped water. Without doubt, I was windbound—for that night, perhaps for days. I should have to watch my chance. I boiled myself a cup of cocoa in the shelter, spread my tent on the rock in the shade of a cedar to make as comfortable a bed as possible, and went to sleep.

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When I awoke it was blowing as hard as ever. The sun had gone, but the great tide of light he carries with him still brightened the western sky. I was broad awake and rested. Sleep had composed me, too. Let it blow, I thought; if I don't get round the point to-morrow, I shall next day. I lighted my pipe and lay staring into the empty vault flanked with the heel of day. Led by a twinkle well known to other men with deeper seas than mine at their ears, the stars trooped out, making the zenith down to the curving light the thing of silent wonder it was for Ulysses and will be for the far-off traveler to come. A late moon was at hand. Little eddies of wind from over the brow whisked my smoke away as I stared into the broad, star-spotted belt of darkness between the flowing sea of moonlight and the ebbing tide of day. Later, in the new light, I rose and picked my way about the island. The channels, scarcely ruffled in the shelter, shone here and there; scattered in the dark mainland beyond, the dead pines were white in the moon; and at the top of the hill, in the wind, I saw the open bay moving and glancing and the spray lifted high on the rocky shore.

A solemn and almost lonesome sense of the

## AT MOOSE DEER POINT

bigness of everything about me began to fill my mind, and I was glad, even in the noises of wind and water, that my shoepacks as I walked made no sound. It was cold on the ridge, and I gladly lay down to view the stars from my bed on the sheltered side. Sleep, to my regret, was coming to shut out the night. It pleased me to think that the less important senses would go first. I knew my limbs had a drowsy numbness while my ears still had the noises of wave and pine, and my eyes the changing shape of a gauzelike cloud. A star, also, I remember, left its trailing mark a moment on the steep of night.

When I awoke again the dipper was lower in the horizon, and though the sound of a heavy ground swell was still loud on the outside, there was not a breath of wind. Neither was there a sign of dawn. I packed my stuff into the canoe and set off, and at three-thirty in the morning pushed out from the adamant cover to rise and fall on the big ground swell of Lake Huron under the dwindled moon.

I think I was a little too much excited at first to see the lark that had appealed to me when the thought of a night dash came with the waking to a dead calm. The black water was moving

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with such an impression of power, and I and my craft seemed so small and feeble, that I could only paddle nervously and look with a kind of catch at the throat into the dark and oily smooth water of each succeeding hollow. Something of the old elemental distrust of the dark was upon me, too, I think.

A heavier gloom dead ahead proved after long to be an island, inside which I paddled, only to find in the distance, straight across my bow, a line of white from which came a sound easily distinguishable from that on the coast line now far in. It turned out fortunately to be two reefs, one a hundred yards beyond the other. Between these I paddled on lumpy waves, the roar of the white water full in my ears. It was very fearful at that time of night; and I came again with a great relief to what were now my long and safe rolls of the open water of the lake.

It was after this but a little time when I was aware that I had a dire hunger. I stopped paddling—all eyes on the dead canoe turning slowly into the trough of the sea. Safe enough. I got out some raisins and hard-tack, put life into the canoe again, and turned my back once more on the low moon. And then it came over



## AT MOOSE DEER POINT

me that I was in a kind of way doing something worth while. I was still more or less fearful, but I wished people might see me. I could have put the shriveled moon, these black billows with their far-off roar, and that white water I had just left, before the footlights, for the world to look at me eating raisins and hard-tack and paddling my canoe alone off a point five miles out in Lake Huron.

That pose passed, driven out by the same sense of the bigness of everything that came to me on the island during the earlier part of the night. The coming of the dawn started it. I saw the touch of paleness with awe—that first faint indication of the tide of light I had seen ebb down the sky the night before. In the majestic movements all around me, I found—and I think the world would have, too,—something better than my chewings and paddlings to look at—the solemn dawn, the dimming stars and moon, and then long after the “sweet flame of the sun.”

Day brought vision; and with that the other senses leaped into renewed being. I saw to the eye's limit the lazy, plunging water and heard afresh its liquid roar—the translucent heaving deeps of it were just over the side of my canoe.

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Touch took with gladness the faintest breeze on my face—I scarcely knew from what quarter it came; gray rock with masses of green rose beautiful and immovable in that restless water, and, still far off, Moose Point islands stretched to vanishing in the west.

The wonder and the magnitude of the change possessed me. Night with its stifled senses—deathlike night,—I had come through that—through its mirk and its fear and its uncertainty; now it was light—morning and kindly light, and pale blue sky,—a whole free dome of it down to the far off water. Had the Earth through the long, black hours cried for all this? Now at last it was here—all the gladness of it, all the unutterable newness of it. And I suddenly was aware that my paddle had been dipping and dipping, and bringing me to my destination. Indeed, even as I came from the spell of morning, the canoe was pointing into a smooth, sun-lighted, island-sown bay—the wide, open water was no more.

## CHAPTER II

### DAVE, THE HALF-BREED

**D**OWN one of the inside channels slipped Dave, of a sunny afternoon when I was cutting bracken for a bed. "Excuse me, sir, but I'd lak to know de way, me, into de Muskosh;" and there he was, not twenty-five yards away—black canoe and all. I had been four days out, leisurely paddling down the Georgian Bay, on my return trip from my vacation. All alone. Twenty-two miles from my destination, I had hit upon an island that served me well for a day's camp. Outwardly it was a mere huddle of wind-hunched pines in a rim of bare rock. But it gave eastward on quiet channels, and westward on blue water to the horizon, and the wood had glades full to the brim of shelter and sunlight. In one of these I had slung my tent; and here the upshot was, I hired Dave. The temporary lone world of my life was changed; I could make and take in speech again and look once more upon the interesting face of man.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Dave was given to talk to me in his broken way; simple, superstitious, and elemental I found him always. Born of an English father, he was left at six years, with three or four other children, to be reared by a French-Canadian mother. They were poor, and Dave saw no school. At sixteen he was in the lumber woods; eight years later he began his thirty-six years in Michigan. Now he was back.

"I lak de islands, me; I thought I tak two, tree days, see old places I worked, leetle boy. Dat's why I ax you de way, me, into de Muskosh." In the dreams of his wandering he had seen these wave-washed, gray islands, had heard the sough in their bent pines; now, with the instinct of the animal, he was among them at the sundown of his days. "I never go way again, me."

We were pottering about supper, and I think I was noticing Dave's costume. He wore a black felt hat tipped slightly back, and the pallor of his mother's race was in the clean-cut features behind the full, black mustache; a blue shirt open at the throat; yellow, tight-fitting overalls, much too short; white moccasins. But all this went from me at his next words. They touched me deep.

## DAVE, THE HALF-BREED

In the matter of friends, I count myself favored enough. Even on that afternoon I knew that from various quarters minds were surmising my movements on that eastern coast of Lake Huron with a sympathetic and in some cases a deeper interest; with one or two of these friends I can sit of a winter evening over a pipe and give and take almost the inmost soul; but I do not remember ever having been moved in quite the same way as by Dave's words. He was doing something that led him away from where I was standing. Suddenly he turned and said, "I lak you; I laked you when I first saw you."

It came direct out of the heart of a child, and at the magic touch of it all the slow reserve of years vanished clean, and I said, I trust with equal simplicity, "I like you too, Dave." In the silence of the sky, the battered pines around us drooped east, and the channels were full of sleeping water.

This man had a pleasure in simple things that drew me to him, and I think would draw anyone who likes to live outdoors. Not at once did I discover it, but by degrees, from things he said. "Pretty nasty off Moose Point dis morning, but, man, I lak it, me;" and my mind went back to



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the joy of my night ride there on the lazy billows in the gloomy moon.

At another time he was telling how, as a young man, he and a partner had a little sailboat for trading with the Indians; "I lak to see it plunge," he said. And there is not a yachtsman on the coasts of all the world but feels with my simple half-breed the strange thrill of this plunging when the boat heels over till the lee scuppers are all a-wash.

I give you one more statement; no man who has ever washed of a morning in lake or river can say it nay. Dave came into the tent, the flush of sleep gone, and his face clean and cool: "I lak to wash in dat water, me; it is so beeg and deep."

There was in him a rich vein of superstition. I pointed out much dry, red cedar on the shore opposite—a prime wood for camp fire.

"Well, sir, y'know," he said slowly, "Indian never burn dat wood. Dey say it bring bad luck. Of course, I tink, me, everyt'ing God made is for some purpose, but—I have nev'r burn dat wood."

His one lament was the islands were "so poor" this year—"no berries, no cherries, no not'ing." A little mountain-ash tree gave him great de-

## DAVE, THE HALF-BREED

light; it made good medicine. He had seen an old Indian woman cure a very sick man. "He go queek, but de squaw cure him wid dat bark steeped to make tea."

In fact, it came in on me after a time, with a sort of surprise, that coloring Dave's whole life was a kind of sub-conscious fear of death. His one hope, too, was to "strak it right"—which meant a steady job uninterrupted by illness on his side or hard times on the other. And it was death by violent means that was never far from him; on a tow of logs in a storm; on a telephone pole by electricity or by a fall; in the woods by falling tree; through one or other of these, a hand would stretch out of the dark and take him unawares.

Sitting on the rocks in the slow-going light, the headlands a clear and beautiful purple across the quiet water, he told of times when the hand had taken a comrade and just missed him. These instances when a comrade, hot to duty in the teeth of danger, breathing, speaking, nimbly moving, would suddenly vanish or be seen again silent and moveless for ever—these had stamped themselves on Dave's mind and given a background to his whole life.

Not that he would shirk death. I feel certain

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

that this simple man with the heart of a child would, at the voice of a leader, still go into dangerous places in the murky night of one of those Georgian Bay storms, when instead of the placid surface in front of us—a thing of beauty—there would be a thing of terror. Nor did his dark background make him unwholesome. He had his joys, I know; his deep sorrows, too; but the nearness of the elemental things—hunger and death—had reduced everything to a grave sobriety. I did not notice it while I was with him, but as I look back now, I cannot remember ever having heard him laugh.

Next morning he helped me pack my stuff for storing—for I was to paddle the twenty-two miles, and the end of the summer was to be that day. Our direction was the same for a mile. Then the canoes came together, and at his, “I hope God will bless you long tam,” I could only bow my head and turn the canoe to where the trees of Coganashene Point hung in the horizon eight miles away. I did not look back; and when at the boat house in Penetanguishene, the night watchman welcomed me after my three weeks’ absence, Dave was in the scenes of his boyhood, by the Sandy Gray Rapids on the Musquosh River, sleeping under the sky.

### CHAPTER III

#### DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOON

I LAY back in the canoe. The sky, heavy and gray, seemed very near; the roar of the first fall, six feet straight over rocks, was full in my ears; and right up the bank in front of me, with those unmistakable signs of human travel, the portage led off between two trees at the top. What was beyond them?

"There are rapids as far as I can see, and I've been down past two." So Roger, my tenderfoot companion, looking little and low between the big trees, called down to me.

I took up the hill and over the portage, all eyes on the water. Three times after its first fall, the river broke into rapids, two of them white. The first of the three was spread water and ran black from me to the farther shore; easy to run, I thought; standing in the canoe, one could dodge the boulders.

When I came to the next it floored me quite. A quarter of the way over from that far shore,

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the river was drawn into a channel twenty feet wide straight for me, was thrown white against my side, and went off at right angles down forty yards of foaming water.

Not the whole river, though. That plunge against my side split the rapid into two parts, both boiling, by far the larger white and rushing off down-stream, the other black and really flowing up; on my right.

It seemed as nasty for running as could be; we should have to make the long carry, in spite of everything; with a slow heart I got to the portage to see what was farther down.

Three-quarters of the way over, the path came upon it all at once: a straight run of white water, one hundred yards long and full of jumping cups—the whole thing plumb up against a sloping rock. A little over half its length it swerved from left to right in a long sheer, swept the shore a bit, and, before taking its final rush thirty yards to a lake below, fell a foot or more to rise in an eternal curl of white.

I looked long and longingly at this broad ribbon sloping away from me, white, wavy, and full of kinks, but I thought of my tenderfoot companion and of the fact that though I knew a



## DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOON

canoe better than my A.B.C.'s, I was quite inexperienced in white water. I went on down the portage, knowing that it would not do.

The heel of the day was coming, and we had worked hard; the energy was small, the spirits down; moreover, a lowering sky threatened rain at any moment. But even as downhearted thus I went with my reason dead set against it, I knew all the while that the long chute was tugging at me like oxen with strong ropes. In this mind I came the full mile's length of the portage and started back.

Then I knew for the first time that I had been swallowed in a big woods. Somewhere on high, for I did not look up, I guessed there was a roof of green; down with me, though, in darkness almost, and in silence, there was only a naked, rusty bottom, stuck thick with hemlock boles.

I looked again at the long rapid in despair and came to the one with the right-angled turn. It was setting up what in my anxiety on the way down I had not noticed—a great noise, that seemed to carry in all directions a little, and then, against the overpowering solitude of forest and heavy sky, somehow to go quite dead. And here, like a flash, it came in on me that if I

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could get my companion to hold the stern, I should run those rapids; more, failing that, I should run them myself. A wave of unaccountable courage! That was it. I could not trace it directly to anything, did not try much—that sudden ardor of the blood, mother of my impulse. Maybe there was in it a memory of climbing at night, by a dwindled moon, the high ground swell of the Georgian Bay into which this river flows; maybe a feeling that here I had met somehow a supreme test for myself. But chiefly for me *it was*, that's all; and with it I knew I had climbed a rung in life to a finer view. And I do not know that I ever had a pleasure quite like that which moved me at the moment with this sublime irrationality in risking my neck for—fun. In high spirits, I bowed low to the rapid-hung river; I twiddled my fingers at it as the best of friends may; then I made off for Roger—Roger, on whose long, oddly-furrowed face, solemn as a judge's, a new tan was driving back a deathly pallor.

"Are you game?" I asked, soothing out the whole thing to him.

I should not have been surprised had he said no. We were different. I was at home in a

## DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOON

canoe, he was almost a greenhorn; I had the open and a pipe, he had a wife and child. But he had insured his life and made his will before coming a thousand miles to trail the north woods with me, and something in my plan must have touched an eerie strain of adventure in him.

"Well, I'm with you, if you think it possible."

It had the sound of a death sentence; but I thought I saw the ghost of an old light in his eye.

"You've some rudiments of the art of living, Roger. Come on!"

The spread rapid was easy; I took it standing, with only one rub; then we headed for the right-angled turn.

My plan was to be drawn straight into it so as to strike bow-on the black water with its upstream flow. The whole thing depended on this; and as we were sucked toward it beyond turning back, I saw that the stern was being drawn into the swifter, stronger current of mid-river—that instead of the whole canoe riding the black back current the greater part of it would be hurling down the white water, stern first. One stroke of a skilled canoeist in the stern would have righted us; but there was no skill there for that; so I kept mum, and Roger did, too.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

At the crest of the rapid, we were diagonally across. By the time the bow had made the black water the stern was sweeping down. There was just one chance and I took it—I might hold the bow on the black water; if we were not swamped in the turn we might yet be right. Down went my blade; I sculled and drew for my life. It held. The stern swept round and struck, and when I turned, my companion had dropped his paddle and was hugging shore.

I was not surprised at the wild look on his face; I had some idea of his crack-the-whip swing on the white part. Moreover, I was kneeling uncomfortably deep in water.

It was a close shave. If a half hour before I felt a vague suggestion that something friendly ought to come to me from the trees, I had not the least doubt now about the nature of the hand that reached up for us out of that river and missed us by a hair. And at thought of the sociable one I had thumbed at it from the bank, I laughed loud out.

In all reason we should have carried our canoe over now; what we really did was tackle the thing again. Twice more we faced it, and each time I saw, before it was too late, the mid-current slowly drawing us in.

## DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOON

Then I got into quiet water and turned the Moon River into a kindergarten in the art of canoeing; and when Roger could pull the stern over without immediate danger of upsetting, we faced the rapid for the fourth time, slipped on to the black water as if it had been a quiet haven, and there almost stopped still. Just over the side white water was tearing the other way.

Along that black path we crept gingerly; then, where the water, with its impact on the shore, seemed to be boiling forty ways, we dared on. All the bubbling and swirling was just over each side. I could see every bubble, every round of the swirls. I thought I heard the thousand different noises of their breakings and movings. Dampness, like a thin spray, came cool on hands and face. The paddle did not seem to hold—had no purchase. The canoe was always moving but getting nowhere, with a suggestion to us of a broncho, bucking sidewise; and all the while we dug into the white water almost as if we were hitting air. Then a boiling mass caught us right. We shot into the current, sat up with a shout, and let it go.

Without a stop for breath we made for the next one.



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

"Down the center, Roger," I cried, approaching it.

"The center; aye, aye, sir!" and I knew from his tone that the uplifting and clarifying spirit of play had seized him hip and thigh.

Then? Then, to our leaping lives, there unrolled itself over the bow of the canoe that charming long white slope.

"I know, I know; I've been down there many a time 'hell bent for election;'" said a driver, when out at the bay I spoke to him of this rapid.

I would not put it quite that way—in print; but if the reader has gone down one of those water toboggans, we went just like him—and the river driver, I guess; and that's about all there is to tell. I was not aware of thinking about or willing my strokes; the full way down my paddle got from side to side with a swift and sure intuition, as if, for the occasion, brain cells had come down to the muscles. It nosed the boat, now to the middle of a cup, now to one side, now to another; and all the while I could catch the shore and the forest sliding by the other way.

Then we struck the sheer, but already the paddle was a far-out, slanted lee-board, heading the bow for the jump with the eternal curl.

## DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE MOON

Straight for the center we dived. There must have been four or five feet from top to toe; for the bow did not rise to the curl, but shot in a quarter of the way up.

When the splash took me fair on the breast and head there was that in me which could have laughed uproariously. Only the fun was too thrilling for laughter, and I was still shut-lipped, and glued with hard intent on the white water and the bow shooting down the cup-filled river, when, in a pouring rain, I heard Roger from the stern lifting up in triumph his voice on high.



## CHAPTER IV

### JONES IN CAMP

ON one of the outer islands of the Georgian Bay, Jones and I set the camp in order, working with our own hands.

"Only for two weeks," he had said, when I broke into his law office in Cleveland and suggested it. "I must be back for the Brown trouble. And no guides or servants, if you are agreed. I have enough of all that here."

So we took a lazy day or two for establishing ourselves. Then of a sudden the air of the place, I thought—straight over the waves from the horizon,—got into his blood. It did not in his case issue in any of the conventional ways,—send him to the rocks a mile out where the best fish hide, or drive him to explore the maze of channels and islands that crowded us from the rear. None of these.

Here and there on this coast are logs that have slipped the boom of many a raft and drifted



" JONES AND I SET  
THE CAMP IN ORDER "



## JONES IN CAMP

ashore. The bark is all off them; they are yellow or red or white—clean and shiny with the wash of a hundred waves. It was on the few of these in our neighborhood that Jones turned his energies.

“Lots of logs,” he said, and his eyes brightened; “we could use them—build a house, build a dock!”

When I next saw him he was paddling down the channel, a smooth yellow log at the stern. A tiny V-shaped movement of water went out from it; it looked wondrously clean; and there was a responsibility in the erectness of Jones’ shoulders. He cached it in a water nook and was off.

My loiterings took me later to the other side of the island, that gave westward, past blue headlands, to the horizon, and where off to the south the sun laid a broad, bright way. Here was Jones, this time with two logs in tow, just setting off for the lee shore.

Somehow it was good to hear his shout at sight of me, good to look at him, too—this mature man a boy again, all the laws and quarrels of men forgotten;—and I crossed the island for a sight of the outfit coming down the other

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

side, a snatch of a child's verse I had read somewhere running all the while in my mind :

Oh, it's I that am the captain of a tidy little ship,  
Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the pond.

Down they came, Jones all flushed with exercise, his small, black eyes—a trifle near—snappingly bright, and, with his pointed features, giving the face a boyishly impish expression that, when he laughed, would have softened a countenance of flint. He was talking nonsense—to the logs,—the almost inevitable nonsense which in some form or other is man's expression at periods of great innocent happiness.

He did not notice me and the stream of his talk flowed on. This trip was not so easy as the other. One log slipped the noose; to recover it while trailing the second meant much manoeuvring and more talk. Farther on both logs grounded on a shoal; and to relieve them Jones waded, knee high, shouting in his fun.

Until there was a log or two in nearly every nook on the sheltered side of the island, he worked (or played) on in that young day rising to its noon and laying its spell upon us both. The very air was noticeable—clean, sweet, and so thin that my body seemed lighter; and the feel

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of it on my face and arms was pleasant as buoyant water to the swimmer's body. The light, too, had a brightness beyond comparison; beaten back from rock and water it seemed to pile up with triple brilliancy against that quarter of the world.

Once there came through this brilliant atmosphere the voice of Jones: "C-o-m-e o-n! C-o-m-e o-n h-e-r-e!" it called in a straining tone. When I got sight of him he was tugging at a slender, knotless pine fifty feet long that would not budge, still keeping up the slow, strained "C-o-m-e o-n!" with each long pull of the paddle. . . .

A certain wood in that region is by all odds the best for camp cooking. A superstition is abroad concerning it; it was never burned by the Indians, and the islands are still full of it. The thing shoots up a few feet, puts out many branches, and then, on account of the little nourishment, soon dies. I told Jones all this, and showed him the gray, tangled stuff here and there on the rock sides.

Instead of gathering it for wood, though, when it came his turn, he took again to the beach. Bits of broken boards began to appear at our landing.



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He would unload these with a kind of pride, as though there were some special virtue in what he was doing. With great industry, too; all the pickings of the shore began to litter the place. The instinct never left him. Up to the last, when we were paddling among the islands, suddenly would come with glee from Jones:

"There's a fine stick of wood" or "There's a box that will come in handy."

I defy any man, under the circumstances, to resist that look of glee; I couldn't; and the stuff would be carried to swell the heaps. In a few days there was enough junk on the island to keep a camp in fires for a month. There was no order in it. It all lay on the clean, smooth rock: limbs, straight and crooked; squared pieces of timber, some full of nails; broken boards; long and short loglets; two broken boxes; even an old pail.

"What's it all for, Jones? We'll never burn it," I kept saying.

"Oh, it will come in handy," he would answer in his cheerful, cocksure way; "we'll make something of it."

That was the thing—"we could make something of it" or "it would come in handy." It was the same idea he had about the logs. Glaring

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out through the fun he was having, the frugality of the man began to amaze me. And when one day, early in our camp, he came through the rock glades, bearing an old sardine can, and deposited it at the foot of a pine tree, I could scarcely believe my eyes.

"I suppose that will come in handy, too, Jones," I said.

"Yes, indeed; we can put drippings in it!" (You are to imagine the "yes" with a cheerful prolongation.)

What we needed, Jones made—his resource was as great as his frugality. A stove first; then a table, wobbly enough when the junk pile was in its infancy—I remember it spilled our coffee,—later, one firm as the rock on which it stood.

His greatest triumph, though, was an arrangement for sleeping. In Cleveland he spoke of a hammock slung in the tent to sleep in; but I warned him of the rock and did my best to persuade him of a camp bed. It was of no use; he brought his hammock, knit his brows at sight of the waste of rock, accepted his discomfort with a laugh, and set all the engines of his brain going for relief.

I told him how to make a bough bed—he

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would have none of it. What then? From the staring fact that he could not drive stakes for a hammock in the tent, he turned to the junk pile—it really was coming in handy,—constructed a rude bed frame, and strung a rope for a mattress. But the rope was too short for close weaving; it was not very strong either. The result was that sometime in the night he would awake with only his head and feet on the rope! This for four nights.

Then came his triumph—a rack for slinging the hammock. It was Jones' day to cook and he spent it on shore. I fished—in the morning far out on the shoals, in the afternoon, for better luck, on the channel near the island. From the camp came the sounds of hammer, saw, and axe. Snatches of a song, too—

Three fishers went sailing out into the west—  
came to me over the water in a high voice.

At my fruitless pastime, I listened to it all, the bright, cool day falling gradually to its night.

Three wives sat up in a lighthouse tower—  
came in another pause of hammering.

A mink crept along the shore near me, smelling rocks and air, then took across the channel,

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its nose pointing upward, its beady eyes shining in the sun. It had an impish face. I could hear its breathing, see the quiver of the frame as its paws worked. Then something stirred the muscles of my arm. . . .

When I paddled in, there stood the contraption for slinging the hammock—admirably suited for it, slender, ugly, and unbreakable, and the material the floatings of Georgian Bay!

The smoke of the evening fire was rising through the pines, and from the shore where Jones was dipping a bucket of water came part of the song that had stuck in his mind all of the afternoon:

For men must work and women must weep,  
Though the harbor bar be moaning. . . .

Anyone who roughs it in the open meets with the necessity for some kind of wash day—indeed, the need is then all the greater. With a kind of disdain for conventional methods one goes to the nearest shore, and the thing is over and done with—the sooner the better.

Not so, Jones. When that inevitable time came for him, it was an occasion. All the conventions must be observed: two waters, the first

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heated just so, a table, a big dish, an apron—the regular wash day was on! A clothes line, too! I know that when I first saw that line I was struck to laughter at the incongruity of it; then it flashed through me with a kind of awe that for the first time since the world began a clothesline held two trees on that island and laid its shadow on the enduring rock. But there it was; and when the rubbing was over, it drooped with the double-rinsed articles and was gazed upon by Jones, blind to its incongruity as though it were in a tenement back yard.

Here again—but no more gossip. I will confess that, though for me men are more to be appreciated than analyzed, I was conscious frequently of a lurking curiosity as to Jones' past. I put it by me and turned always to the enjoyment of our brief enough time together. I was aware of a growing attachment. With the intimacy of camp life, we shared every pleasure; but I chiefly remember how morning after morning we awoke to a delicious coolness off the level water; how at noon we heard the thousand different sounds of waves beating, in the summer wind, the rock crevices and caves of our westward shore; and how daily the little glades of



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our island were full of shelter and sun,—outdoor, cool, wholesome, was our life—we had new nerves and vigorous brute health.

Came our last night together—drizzling, with a touch of fall in that northern latitude.

We made a fire—there was wood enough, heaven knows. The flames lighted up the pine trees, the circle of their illumination shut us in from the black night. Pure bodily pleasure was in that fire; our eyes were long fixed in quiet to its leaping color. Then Jones began to talk with a precision that always marked his utterance.

“There is in my mind the memory of a fire that *was* a bonfire. I was a lad of eleven, fishing with my father on the Labrador coast.

“A whole boat load of us—thirty or forty, women and men,” he went on. “The season was over up Chudleigh way and we were running for home all down that barren shore. First under good weather—a fresh breeze out of the northwest—every man and woman glad at the summer of peril near an end. Then a change suddenly to intense cold; out of the infinite northeast came a gale in which no boat like ours could long live. The captain headed straight for the shore in the night. Father held my hand.



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Wherever our dim lights showed me a man's face, it was grim-set for the inevitable end. I remember a woman, white, large-eyed and still. It all comes before me now after these years with scarcely any diminution of vividness—the bitter cold and snow, the captain's orders, the set faces, and above all the roar of the wind and waves. Then a sound more awful than any yet; child as I was, I knew what it meant. But before I was aware of what had happened, the boat was high on a flat rock, broken clean in two; the great wave had roared back into the night; and we, all save one man who was taken back with it, were scrambling over rocks, without much to hope for, but with a great dumb gratitude at heart that our faces were turned from the devouring sea.

“Farther on we came to what proved to be the only bit of woods on the shore for miles, and here some of the men lighted a fire. With tools from our boat we cut down whole trees, and the flames roared to the top of the forest. I remember my face aglow while my back was stinging cold. Thus we stood all night. Two of our strongest men started off next day to tramp over that wilderness to a village we guessed was fifty miles away, but it was fourteen days before

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a steamer, already overloaded with the wrecked fishermen of that terrible storm, took us on board. I remember the tears of many for those whom they would never see again.

"The vessel landed father and me one evening, twelve miles from home; but we walked it; and at four o'clock in the morning mother received us as from the dead. We were all happy again. I think I never tasted anything so good as that cup of hot tea mother made for us.

" 'Sonny, do you think you'll go fishing again next year?' she asked, watching me eating and drinking.

" 'Yes, if daddy will let me,' I said."

Then the man, looking into the fire, from which he had scarcely taken his eyes, laughed that flint-melting laugh on his boyish face.

"You know what a boy is," he said. "I did go next year and for six years afterwards; and here I am."

He left next morning; I stayed on for a week. It had been my intention to burn at once the junk on the landing; but, think of me what you will, I could not bring myself to do it until the last day—one of wind and cold weather—and then only because I had promised the owner of the

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island to leave it as I found it. All the while my man Dave and I were getting it together and later in the evening when it was on fire I could not help thinking of another rock-bound coast bleaker than mine, other flames, forest high, and the man, now a noted lawyer getting justice for Widow Brown, once a fisher boy on the Labrador coast, holding in the night and the storm his father's hand.

## CHAPTER V

### A PAIR OF DUCK STALKINGS

#### I.

**I** LIKE a gun, have always liked it; and though I am not a hunter—nor shall I ever be—yet I am the child of my race, and never game comes into reach but all the savagery of my ancestors throws the stock to my shoulder and their old lighted eye along the barrel. Nothing happens usually except noise and the rapid scurry of the game; once, I remember, a deer stayed its quiet walk a moment to wonder what the noise was. It is not always that way as you shall see. There have been hits; seldom in a sportsmanlike manner, let it be frankly told; and those here related, I must confess, became upon reflection, rather abhorrent to me. Far higher is the block-and-hatchet scene outside a chicken yard.

In addition to my inexperience with a gun, I have another mark which distinguishes the man who is not a hunter from the one who is: I am

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never expecting anything. Maybe that's why I'm always seeing game; one thing certain, that is why it always comes with the pleasure of surprise, like a lake unlooked for with a tumble of white water at the other shore. So that if it be not all of hunting to shoot game, I find myself prepared both by constitution and by inclination to deal largely in the by-products. It was these I was enjoying when I came upon the ducks.

We had landed for an hour's hunting in the woods of the mainland and the direction to the right fell to me. My way led up a tiny slope first, then pitched into a valley. Halfway across I fought it out with a swamp tangle for a hundred yards and tackled a long rise. A fall nip was in the air that lay fresh on my cheek and with the woods odor came sweet and clean for my smelling. Snatches of the wind that on high was straight across my direction got down now and then to where I was, and set some leaves to idle motion; halfway up the slope, a brilliant yellow one stirred and shimmered in a momentary ray of fall sunlight. No sound. There may have been a "thousand eyeballs under hoods" staring at me, but their owners had all gone dumb at my coming; only the distant,

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raucous noise of a crow, signal-warning of my companions' approach, perhaps, invaded the quiet of the woods.

Then at the top of the slope came an unexpected thing, two of them, in fact: I saw, down as pretty a woods' glade as one could wish for, water covered with rice and flags and lily pads; and in an open pond near the shore, busy at the feeding, five ducks! I stood stock still, in their full sight, had they looked up.

I do not know which surprised and delighted me more, the water or the ducks. I thought I knew every lake and bayou of the locality pretty well and I found my mind in alternation between orienting the water and arranging my plan of attack. The rival interests kept snatching at my mind, but even while they did so, I had made and was carrying out my plan, an amateur's, out for pleasure. Frankly I did not care much at this stage whether I got the ducks or not; so, taking the easier but less sure method, I decided to stalk them walking, with tree trunks for cover—if they failed to see me coming, then their strategy was at fault; but even if I did not get a shot, I'd have some fun.

I side-stepped and was hidden by a hemlock.



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Had they seen? I peeped out—not a bit of it, though the view down that long lane was absolutely unobstructed.

Under the cover of the hemlock, I slipped back over the crest, and twenty yards farther up came to the view of my game through the trunks of a scattered wood. By a pine first, then by a black birch, I stalked off fifty of the many yards between the crest and the killing range of my gun. I was getting warm in two ways; but here perforce my progress on that angle must stop, for I was face to face again with an open reach, the nearest cover ten yards to the left.

I hugged the birch and thought. Then I was aware of a regular but muffled pounding on the tree. I looked and listened. Suddenly it came in on me that the sound was within myself.

“It’s my own heart, by hickory, thumping at my ears like a trip-hammer,” I thought; and with “just what no hunter’s heart should do,” spoken half aloud, I laughed heartily enough at myself.

One consolation, the ducks had not heard the pounding.

I prepared to cross the ten yards. Behind a low bush to my rear, I made myself into a walking tree. I put one bushy branch into each of

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my side pockets, another in my belt in front, and tied the whole loosely around my neck.

It took what seemed an age to cross that open space. I side-stepped it, almost two a minute—rather a step every two seconds, with a stock-still twenty-eight in between. Through the leafy screen my eyes were ever on the ducks.

It must have been a capital place for feeding. They dived continually, remaining down sometimes more than half a minute; they would shoot along the surface, bills out; now and then one would pull down a head of rice. But for the most part they dived; and when I was three steps from my cover, down they all went together. I got myself out of sight, stripped off the bushes, and with the help of a pine, a gnarled maple, and another birch, I stole within sixty yards, the trip-hammer going again full blast.

Even now I did not hurry; but when three ducks were bunched I let go both barrels. I said a moment ago that I lacked two qualities of the hunter; it should have been more; for I also see too much. It does not prevent me from enjoying the pot later, if there happens to be one; but with the blood up I become wide-eyed for details; and when the smoke cleared now I saw

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everything down on that swamp. The head of one duck was round on its back, the white of its breast was full in view, and it was attempting to swim with one leg. The body made a slow half-turn; then all motion ceased. I remember as I drew the triggers that one duck threw its tail up in the act of diving; it came up as the smoke of my charge moved, stone dead, and lay partly on its side, its neck full stretched, one leg straight out behind.

I did not notice the third; something unlooked for was taking place. The other birds had risen, but to my surprise their flight drew two quick, small circles and they were swimming again by their dead companions, their heads high and alert.

I wondered why they did that. I had this theory at first; they were so surprised at the noise of the shot on the water that they failed to hear the report—which, of course, reached them later—as a man intent on a book will not hear the clock strike or a street-car grind round his corner. But when I afterward put the case to a noted biologist he told me that the element of comradeship entered into it largely and that

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these two ducks were simply waiting for the others.

You may be sure I did not think much about it at the time; I had to get another shot. But for a broken second things did not go well, and here you have the fourth obstacle that bars me from the circle of hunters.

I have heard of an absent-minded poet who walked unconsciously into a pond of water. "Oh," he said naively afterward, "I soon found out where I was!" Well, so did I soon find out that I could not put a shell wrong-way-to into a gun! Yes, the joke is on me, surely; and indeed, when I did discover what in my excitement I was trying to do, I could not help smiling at myself; and that stirred common sense. My eyes, I think, began to go quiet again. A thought was even forming itself that three birds were enough for three men.

And then the two swimming ducks, on the point of flight, got into line with me, and almost together. Common sense and quietness were at an end; think of me what you will, I threw the gun to my shoulder like a flash and shot them both. Then I got my canoe and sought the entrance to the tail of crooked water.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

### II.

I can convey to you but very inadequately the breathlessness and light of that mid-morning in early September when I had my second stalking, especially the light. There comes to me now, not the ducks, not my long crawl with its strange disappointment at the end, but a bare world of rock and water, upon which as the rays of the sun seemed beaten back, light was piling itself on light. It dimmed the sky to a grayish blue, and the whole of the Georgian Bay lay under the sun the color of a used nickel—no sheen, not a ripple. In that still world one heard the chug of a motor leagues off, and the whistle of a saw-mill thirty miles away.

If there was one duck there were a thousand. I had come upon them by chance. For it was not ducks I was after particularly, though I had my gun. I would take whatever came; I might find a good swimming place (the day promised a great heat), or a patch of late blueberries, or it might be only a new channel or inlet with gray foliage-touched islands at the sides.

When one is camped on the outer edge of that rim of islands that lines the eastern coast of



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Georgian Bay, one must go either out into the open where the low rocks are or in among the islands—there is scarcely any other choice; and my canoe, that morning, took the course into the first channel almost of its own accord. I remember, with great quietness—unconsciously one avoids noise on such a morning—going back to camp with a prime piece of wood for firing. This indicates how purposeless my movements were. I carried it up the long, sloping back of rock to the fireplace, without any disturbance to my sleeping companion.

Not much more than three quarters of a mile from our camp, I was nosing, out of mere curiosity as to where it led, into a tiny channel off the main one; and the lay of the country made me think as I came to its end in small boulders that I could find what I wanted to know by rising on my knees.

I was down again in an instant. I found a lake; but I found more; the lake was literally covered with ducks!

Nothing could have happened more calculated to disturb the quiet mind of me so much in keeping with the unmoved September world outside. Goodbye to peace of mind!



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To avoid noise I waded ashore; and from behind a rock hill took my bearings. The lake with its immediate surroundings was like an immense soup plate. The sloping rock rim of it was five hundred yards wide; and bare as the rim of an ordinary plate it looked to me, clean back to where a scattering low wood ran down to meet it ninety degrees around from where I lay.

When I got to the cover of that wood I saw more accurately the nature of the way between me and the ducks. For a hundred yards it was uneven rock, sparsely covered with small timber debris—branches, rotting trunks; dead, brown grass was in the hollows, and this ran beyond the debris line almost to where a single low bush grew, I judged, still a hundred yards, over perfectly bare rock, from the pitch into the lake.

Well, there I was, with the duck-littered lake five hundred yards away; and it never occurred to me not to make a try for a shot.

“Do you know the long day’s patience, belly down—?”

one writer asks; going on, if I remember aright, to speak of a something out of range.

I did not know much about it then, but I do

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now; and what I wonder at is not the patience so much as the fact that over all the hardships of that long crawl pleasure should still be the dominant note. I did not get a single duck; you may as well know that first as last (I think I deserved something); but it shows that the pleasure of hunting cannot be altogether in the bag. Neither can it be linked with external comfort; for that crawl, let me tell you, was no twilight jaunt in yachting shoes!

To be more like a river driver, I wear in that country a semi-startling bandanna, loose at the open throat. I tied this about one knee, my regular handkerchief—a wealthy one, too—about the other, and got down on my hands and knees. Before I learned to be careful I had barked the finger-joints on my gun-carrying hand on a rough rock.

I think I never felt the sun so near. My shirt at my back was a hot compress. When I got to a depression that gave hiding I would roll over on my back a moment in sheer relief; and when I reached the bush I am certain that no animal after a chase, ever sought shade more gratefully than I sent my hot head into the coolness of the leaves.

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For nearly two hundred yards more, in the broad open, under the pitiless sun, in full sight of that lake-full of ducks, I wriggled my way, flat down, now—slowly, slowly. First, the gun lifted carefully clean up, carried the arm's length, and as carefully laid down; then the hands back to shoulders, the raising of the body on hands and feet for the swing of the whole a foot or more forward. Thus, foot by foot, I came at last to where the way pitched into the water.

How long I should have to bake there I did not know. Never water looked so cool and attractive; I could have risen and with a shout plunged in; but I felt I had to play out the game I had begun, and, foolish or not, play it to the end I did. I loaded the gun and watched, along the barrel, the movements of the ducks.

They made scarcely a sound and little movement. They were feeding, I think; but of that I am not sure. Really they seemed to be resting more than anything else; and if they had food in view they went at it in a lethargic way—quite unlike the fierce effort of the five on the swamp. Very rarely did I see any diving. In a stately way one would swim toward another that bowed

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many times in recognition; others would just sit, with what appeared to be a slight shifting of a wing.

For my part I am at a loss to know what they were doing; and for a time I despaired of a shot until I saw that their slow movements did cause a change of position and that in three or four instances round the lake groups had detached themselves from the main body and were slowly working toward shore.

Down in front of me the same thing happened; a group of twenty or more separated itself from the main body and began by a degree scarcely perceptible to widen the space between themselves and the others. If that kept up much longer there would be a shot; I even tried my eye along the gun in preparation.

And then there fell upon that quiet—nothing else but the blow of an axe! Just once. It came over a mile, but it was as though struck by my side. The sound of it was sharp and clear; it laid itself against rock sides all around and was hurled back; it seemed to fill the world. At the instant crack of it the head of every duck went high and alert; there was a hurried back-and-forth movement over the whole surface, then out

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in the middle a hitting of wings on water as a few ducks rose. The whole flock began to break; the world was filled with the noise of quick-slapping wings on water; in a few seconds the little lake was bare and smooth and gray. . .

"You didn't get anything?" my companion asked, cynically enough.

"Not a thing. How's lunch?"

I was buttering my third slice before I ventured—

"You didn't cut any wood?"

"Not a bit; I stuck the axe into that piece you brought up, but I saw enough lying around for the kettle. Hang it, this isn't a day for work anyhow!"

And then over the pipe I could tell him the whole story with a laugh.



THE WHOLE FLOCK  
BEGAN TO BREAK





## CHAPTER VI

### LOGS

“**P**ROSAIC as logs?” Not so. They cry out of poetry, and distance—the essence of romance. In the round of their hundred seasons, on what still earth, needle-strewn or snow covered, under what unchanging green roof, did they once point to the sky? Nay, more. For them, wives have been lonely for months, the men in a quarter of the frozen North, to break the roofs of green and let the stars shine on the prone logs and disturbed snow; or, the hard season gone, to gather at dark and separate at dawn while the ‘drive,’ current carried, goes slowly on the quiet places or takes its fierce leap at the ‘chutes’ to be bruised and barked on the rocky sides.

Scattered on the long shore of the Georgian Bay, one finds these logs, lost from many a tow, barked for the most part—yellow or red or white, washed clean and shiny. One comes to look upon them as a part of the place, to conceive a

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liking for them as for the trees trailing east. The canoeist on a long trip down the bay, taking at a venture the open between distant points, will meet one miles out, isolated as himself, lifted and lowered on the long swell; sometimes in the dark hours, snug in his tent from wind and rain, he will turn to sleep with an unaccountable touch of fear at the sound of one or two dunting and dunting on the rocks; but in the clean quiet world of the morning after, will see only with delight their still-wet, naked bodies shining in the sun.

They are everywhere. On far-out islands they lie or in deep bays, gray with years or new from the last cut; in sheltered shallow nooks, dead heads, they are sunken save for an end; and they are towed the bay's long length by thousands in boom bags, sometimes caught in a storm, now and then with admirable skill cuddled in perfect shelter till it blows itself out. At the deep end of an estuary one may find a thousand-foot slide built for their safe passage over the last leap of a river into the bay; or he may find his way into this nearly blocked by the cages, at whose doors stand men with quick eyes for end stamps— hearts or circles or what not—indicating the different companies operating on the same river;

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while in almost any of the scattered harbors of the bay, acres of logs wait to be fed into the mills. Even at this late date, with the edge of the pine country far away, nearly every town on the Georgian Bay would suffer economically if logs were removed from it, some would even cease to exist. That is evident. But it is not so evident that if this playground had not been bordered by pine forests, if its rivers did not even yet tap their far-away edges, it would be robbed of much interest and pleasure. Logs of one kind or another and their hazardous manipulation on it and on the rivers flowing into it have created an atmosphere romantic and melancholy, the atmosphere of old unhappy far-off things.

The second falls from the bay on the Musquosh River is called the Sandy Gray Falls. Every member of the Madawaska Club, the large tourist colony at Go Home Bay, knows it well. But it is more than a falls; it is the centre for a tradition. One may hear of it from far off. To my inquiry at a town on the bay forty miles from it as to the origin of the name, I was asked hesitatingly if I were a relative of Sandy's; and upon saying that I was not, I was told with reluctance and fear that Sandy Gray, foreman of

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a river-driving gang, had been drowned at the fall because he had attempted to break a log jam *on Sunday morning*. At a town even farther away, the story went that Sandy had received sudden punishment for blasphemy. "Boys," he had said to his men that morning, "we'll break the jam or breakfast in hell!" He did both, so my informant went on; for the moving of the key log which he finally accomplished freed the whole jam so quickly that Sandy was carried down with it. From Dave, the half breed, I picked up a slightly different version. There is the same splendid victory-or-death defiance, but the details of how the effort was made are, even if improbable, much more interesting. In a noose at the middle of a long rope was tied Sandy Gray, drive foreman, whose logs were jammed at the falls now bearing his name. The ends of the rope were passed over the limbs of trees one on each side of the river, so that when the jam was freed Sandy could be hoisted clear. Alas! the speed was not fast enough; rope and all he was borne to his destined end.

It happened that I was to get something like evidence about Sandy Gray. A few years ago I talked with a man who was in Gray's outfit

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when the accident occurred, although he did not actually see it. He was so old when I saw him that there was some sign of dotage; but I piece together his incoherent story for what it is worth, feeling sure that in spite of it the traditional one will still live. Immediately after the breaking up of the ice in the spring of 1867, Sandy Gray left Gravenhurst to float five thousand sticks of square timber [sic], each sixty feet long, to the waters of the Georgian Bay. Reluctantly but hopefully he went; for when the work was done he was to return and marry the daughter of a tavern-keeper in that town; and by late June he came to the fatal fall.

As one looks now at the comparatively small volume of water tumbling down the steep-sloping drop of twenty feet or more, one wonders how such pieces ever could be got over. There is a slide far gone in decay at one side, and at the brink an old crib showing that the water could be raised eight or ten feet; but I did not gather from the old man that these were built at the time. For two or three hundred yards above the fall is a fairly swift, slow-curving rapid; and into this, increased many fold in volume, the timbers one by one were let and sent over the



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fall. By mischance, or carelessness on the drivers' part, a stick instead of going straight on over, struck the bank, swung round, and lodging against the other side, blocked the way. There it was, bent so much by the powerful river that it was at first thought a second stick coming end on would break it. Not so. The drive was held up. Finally Gray did what is almost unbelievable: he stepped on the swaying timber to nick it with his axe; it broke suddenly and he was carried over.

So run the different stories; of the actual facts there is no record; but the certainties are the falls bearing his name; on a point a mile down, a rude board with the simple *Alex. Gray, 1867*, cut with a knife; and for forty miles around among men of the mill towns on the bay, whose lives are lived with logs, the atmosphere of the old fatality. . .

About the whole lumbering industry from forest to mill, from mill to consumer, there lurks for me a fascination that leaps out and has me by the throat when I touch any of its wide ramifications. And if any spot could be called the heart of the industry, it is the Georgian Bay. Standing by a big gang saw in one of its hive-mills,

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one is a kind of Mr. Facing-both-ways: backward to logs and drives and primeval forests; forward to lumber and buildings and all the useful containers for civilized men. But for me always the backward view: the solemnity of a forest unviolated; the "stranger's bed" in far-off lumber camps. Kindly, considerate, and elemental I have found with scarcely an exception these men of the woods and waters. One late August a French-Canadian from Montreal, seven hundred miles away (he wouldn't see his family again till spring, he said), cried out when I offered pay for 'toting' my canoe over his twelve-mile cadge route: "You don't owe me notin." Rivermen have always been friendly. They may have made night and day hideous in one of the Bay towns while their year's wage lasted, but they have given me in the woods when I needed it, their unstinted aid. A sort of wild freedom characterizes their work: it appeals to the dash of youth; and for the imaginative Frenchman, its fitting symbols are the gay bandana and the flaming sock. But it is trying work; little wonder if when youth is gone, the high spirits begin at the end of a long drive, to flag.

Such an end I fell in with recently on the

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Wahnapitae River, near where it falls into the Georgian Bay. The tail of the drive, jammed at a rapid, filled the river a half mile back. Though it was but little after nine, a man was paddling a kettle of tea to a convenient spot for the group's morning 'snack,' the regular cooking outfit being all in the long-pointed boat, the cook waiting for a chance to set up at the portage. Afternoon saw the logs free enough for us, with the help of the drivers, to work through, only to be held up a mile farther down by another jam, at the end of which we could see the two men who were watching the van. Next morning this was free; we made another advance, to be stopped again; and this jam the two men—a man and a boy, rather—were just setting out to relieve.

Late night brought them back wet to the waist. They made slight changes in their clothing, had supper of ham and bread and tea, and were about to lie down for the night when I stepped over to have a talk. I thought I had never looked into a more depressing face than the man's—thin to emaciation, with lustreless blue eyes. His hair was streaked with gray; and when he spoke all hope seemed gone from

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his monotonous voice. True, every other word was a curse, but it was all so mild and feeble as to be utterly without effect.

"Do you smoke?" I said, offering my tobacco.

"Yes, he did, but he had such a blank, blank pain in his blank, blank side that he had almost decided not to fill up that night;" and I thought it a tribute to his cordiality that he did finally load a pipe.

The long twilight had just gone dark. Stillness was on the woods. Up from the river the quiet sound of the current at the bend; now and then the bunt of a log on the jam farther down.

He had been in the woods all winter; and when the ice broke, they began the drive, nearly three hundred miles back. (Many blank, blanks.)

His companion was a boy of nearly twenty, fresh as the morning. At his open throat, a cross was suspended by a string around his neck. It seemed he could not keep still. Suddenly a toad leaped from the bushes into the little open space; the boy was on it like a flash, caught it, let it go, caught it again.

"It's a blank, blank life," continued the man, paying no attention to the other; "early and late,

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

wet all day—never again!” . . . ‘Yes, we should probably get through next afternoon.’

But we did not wait; and I came up with him next morning near noon. He stood in water to the knees, keeping logs off a reef in a rather slow shallow rapid. We had carried our stuff a half mile through the woods, crossed the river by an unaccountable lane in the jam, pushed our way through fifty feet of crowded logs (one hour’s sheer toil), and again carried the stuff another three-quarters of a mile to where the logs were moving free a hundred yards above the rapid.

I thought I could easily push through them to the portage at the other side, but in the very centre I found myself in the midst of twenty or thirty. “Here’s the early and untimely end of my cedar canoe,” I thought, with my heart in my mouth. I felt sure the man saw me, but he never moved. Then it flashed in on me that if there had been real danger, the old man, nimble as a squirrel, would have been over the logs to my rescue. He did not speak or make a sign. I was fast in, holding my paddle up, the canoe lined with logs on both sides. Very quickly we swept down past him.

“The blank, blank things will spread when



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you get down a little distance. Good bye!" he said.

"Oh, good," I managed to say; "how's the pain?"

"Better, *thank God!*"

And scarcely a mile farther down we saw from a high bluff one of those long French River estuaries of the Georgian Bay, filled to the eye's limit with free-flowing logs. . .

When the captain of a tow-boat leaves French River on the long hundred mile journey to the lower end of the bay, he takes his life into his hands; for though trip after trip may be made in comparatively quiet water, sudden and fierce storms are possible at any time—and then it is a different story.

Such a storm fell on the Georgian Bay in early August a few years ago. On one of the outer islands I had pitched my tent in perfect shelter, though but a hundred feet from the shore open to the full Lake Huron. For two days and nights the breaking water roared and the wind in the trees was like steam escaping from a hundred locomotives. I was in the quiet centre of a whirlpool of sound.

The third day the wind fell; the water leveled;

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## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

the sun came forth again; the Georgian Bay seemed somehow more beautiful to me because I had with a kind of awe looked for a period at her terrible power. From an afternoon of talk on the east side of the island with chance visitors who could again venture out from sheltered inside quarters, I walked west into the adventure of the day—the coming of the logs. There, more than fronting the whole island, fifty yards out, came slowly a mighty raft of logs—sixty thousand or more—a great golden-brown raft, in the afternoon sun rising and falling on the tiny swell, a dull crackle of myriad rubbings filling all my world. I was besieged by an army of logs; no, visited—a most romantic visit, quiet, unexpected, mysterious, suggestive of distance. And then doubling my wonder came the assurance that the vast raft, perfectly intact, was enclosed by no boom. It was hard to believe the evidence of sight. By what subtle power had these many unfettered individuals been held together on the wide spaces of the Georgian Bay? The great mass touched the shore of the island, swung round the ends, filled the channels, divided on other islands, and into the deeper bays slowly disappeared, all but about five hun-

## LOGS

dred that had been pushed on to the shelving rocks of my own island; and when in the night another storm beat upon that coast, the noises of these pounding the rocks, I who am country bred could liken to nothing but the feet of horses, a hundred it seemed like, heard from the stable below, pounding the barn floor at a 'rush with the load up the high driveway. For two hours I steeped with a strange pleasure, my ears in that unforgettable sound.

A year or two afterwards I fell into talk with a man at a boat landing. He was a lake-captain and knew what it was to go reeling down the Georgian Bay on the late last trip of the season, the ship ice from stem to stern, from water line to spar top. But he had recently been on tow boats; and I told him about the coming of the logs, giving him the exact date and year. "I remember the storm well," he said. "Three boats got caught in it and had to let go. One raft went on a reef, one went to the Giant's Tomb, and one went in to you. That was mine. When I left French River on that trip, I had not been out long before I knew something was coming. I headed out for the open bay; if you're in clear water you can hold on. The storm came

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

and I held ; for forty-eight hours I hung on without leaving the wheel, the seas going green over us, six feet deep ; and it was only when I saw that we were near a group of far-out islands and making straight for them that I gave the order to let go. It was either that or lose the barge and crew."

One morning, on tranquil and sunlit water, I went from a barge, high-laden with lumber, to a tug. Where the spaces of the Georgian Bay are fairly wide, it had left its tow of logs, to bring us from Port Severn, at the extreme lower end of the Bay, out the narrow and intricate channel to those same wider spaces, where there was room either for the barge itself to sail or the king barge to pick it up. If I remember aright it took us a half hour to come out, but with three bags of logs behind, it took us all day to go the same distance in. And when the captain at the boat landing told me his story, I tried to turn that slow day of mine on tranquil and sunlit water into his forty-eight hours of pit night and murky day, and fierce wind, and seas going six feet green over a boat almost helpless, tied to a deadly retarding, sixty-thousand-log load.

## CHAPTER VII

### CANOE NIGHTS

**M**OSQUITOES first drove me to my canoe for sleep. I thanked them—later, not then. Caught by night in an unsuitable place for camping, I was forced to set up in a low woods, and they had me. No sleep, of course; for six hours we lay there half smothered by netting and the dead, close air of the woods;—worried, “het up,”—just damning right and left.

At last I thought of the canoe; perhaps the infernal pests would not be so bad in the middle of the narrow, woods-choked river, and I might push my body under the thwarts. The scheme worked; four of us spent the hours left of night in two canoes. Cramped quarters? Yes, indeed. Feet to the center, with thwarts pressing close upon our bodies, back and breast were the only positions to lie in; and we had to get up to turn over. We slept, though; and that paid for the discomfort.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

But I remember as the long-sought drowsiness slid into my limbs and drew my eyelids closed, the thought that sleep was coming to me in that odd bed ran through me with a thrill of gratitude and pleasure. I opened my eyes again. The sides of the canoe boxed me close in; the deck was like a big hood; I could make out a lane of dark sky notched irregularly by forest shores and hear a low rapid against the quiet of the night. And I had a stronger admiration than ever for my canoe, not only for this present great relief but also for—what I well knew—the long series of novel nights to come.

When later I tried it alone, the new bed went better. By skilful management I could turn without getting up; I could by sandwiching my legs horizontally even lie on my side; and on that same trip I used the canoe for a bed several times. Morning, though, sometimes late night, too, always made me aware of discomforts. It was a nuisance to be awakened in turning by a blow against a thwart, or if awake, to go through a carefully thought-out movement to get turned at all.

The keelson also bothered me. It rose above the footboards perhaps a half inch; and the



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boards themselves were narrow, and left bare a lot of protruding ribs. I used to be aware of a dinge in my body from one or the other of these in spite of the blankets and the thin bough bed the shallow quarters allowed; and although I still thought this method of sleeping was better in the long run, all things considered, than a snap bed on the ground, I could not help wishing for fewer thwarts and a more even lie.

So when the time came for a new craft, I took the boatman into my confidence. "Must that center thwart be immovable? It works splendidly by day," I went on when I saw him shake his head, "no fault to find whatever; but in the night watches, sir, I could wish it at the devil. That long keelson, too, sticking out like the backbone of a thin horse, there just where it shouldn't be for a sleeper—now why? Answer me that."

The outcome was that there met me one year at my point of embarkation on the Georgian Bay a craft to my heart's desire. *Cedar-rib*, it's called; only there were no ribs at all within hailing distance of where I should lie; the floor was as smooth as a billiard table; and when I looked a little more closely, I found a contriv-



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

ance for slipping on and off the middle thwart that was my special admiration. "A bedroom chair, no less!" said I when I saw the cane seat at the stern.

"Better have some kind of dummy thwart from gunwale to gunwale to keep the sides of the canoe from spreading out of shape," the boatman wrote. "All the better if it curves a little upwards."

So that first day when we got things ship-shape for the cruise, I found a piece of red cedar that drew the proper curve, and cut a groove in it at either end to grip the gunwale like a vise. It gave all the stability of the permanent thwart and bowed high enough up to satisfy the girth of an alderman—and there I was. Like immortal Kent, I have "years to my back"—a good many; but that blowy night, on the quiet side of a pine clump, when I peeled off for sleep in my new toy, with a slip of moon looking on, I was twelve again to the very hour. I wanted to lie awake in enjoyment; it was my first night out, after a long hibernation indoors; but I had no sooner stretched myself than sleep laid fast hold on me, and I did not awake till morning.

Advantages? Yes; there are some. A canoe

## CANOE NIGHTS

finished as mine is always presents an even surface to the body stretched on it. It is not so much because ground or rock is hard that it is uncomfortable to sleep on, but because it is uneven; the root so insignificant when one first lies down is intolerable before morning; the body flinches at mounds and hollows; and I have often noticed with what almost sheer pleasure, after a series of nights on these, I come upon a rock hard as iron but level as a mill pond. Well, the canoe always gives this satisfaction.

It's dry, too. If a tent is used, a shower just before camping often necessitates time and work drying out the tent bottom before satisfactory sleeping can be obtained; with the canoe, it may mean merely the turning of it over for half an hour to make the bed in it dry as a chip. Besides, one can choose his bedroom—in the lee or in the wind, as cold or heat or mosquitoes demand; in the open on a high spot; deep in the woods if necessary;—anywhere, even out on the water.

Moreover, the size of the canoe saves time and labor and adds to comfort. If a mattress of boughs is made, less bulk is required and the sides of the canoe keep them from spreading.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

That same size, too, allows a thicker blanket padding. For ordinary sleeping on the ground, I can double the under fold of my Hudson Bay blanket; with the canoe for bed, I can triple it, making a bottom six-ply thick—a veritable mattress; and always the covering can be tucked in—or needs no tucking in, for the sides prevent any sliding.

But even if it had none of these advantages I should still use it—for fun. A man carries a canoe on his shoulders through the odored woods; to his delight and danger, he rides it centaur-like on tossing waves; with it he enters hidden channels and preserves the silence inviolate. And somehow to use for a bed by night what one has done these with by day is the height of romantic enjoyment.

Why should we always be looking for practical advantages? Call my way of sleeping a fad if you will; but is it not quite beyond value in terms of efficiency or dollars and cents that for even one short period that year it recalled my boyhood and let me share emotion with a far-off brother-lad, there by the pine trees in the young moon? . . .

In spite of rain that first season I was able out

## CANOE NIGHTS

of my brief eleven nights to take eight in the canoe, most of them, like my first, with sleep unbroken from twilight to dawn. Others were more varied or had fringes unforgettable.

Unsettled weather makes bedtime a problem whether to spend the night out or in. I've taken the risk and been wakened by rain; sometimes I've won out. One windy night I lay down in shelter under threatening clouds. When I awoke the sky had cleared, but in the bright moonlight the wind was raging round my bed. I changed my position, only far enough around that little clump of woods, you may be sure, to miss the blow, and went to sleep again; but before the wind held steady that night straight out of the north, I had to change again twice. A canoe night with a vengeance! And yet I would not have missed it for a great deal. . . .

The cruise that year went in part through the Georgian Bay; and one evening I came to the northern entrance to Honey Harbor, where the summer cottages are thick, and made supper on one of the islands. Voices came clear from every quarter, and, what was much less to my fancy for a night on the water, motor launches went continually by, most of them on the op-

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

posite side of the island, but three or four on the channel in front of where I sat.

It was dusk when I set out to find a berth on the water for my bed. I was long about it; I wanted the protection of low rocks, but everywhere I found deep water. That would never do; at any moment a motor boat might make an end of my sleeping; and I was about to run in and spend my night on shore, when my paddle hit a shoal and I found what I wanted.

Some of the rocks broke the surface. I threw out my anchor; and then at the length of my tether I sculled a full circle without hitting. Good! I should float free in any change of wind. I was also safe from the motor boats, which had been on my mind ever since I camped, and whose sounds were still all about me. And as the canoe drifted taut and began gently rocking, and swinging to and fro, I put up my paddle and went to bed.

In a few moments I saw two men coming straight to where I lay. One was much taller than the other, and both were so engrossed in talk as not to see me until quite near.

"My God, what's this!" said the shorter one, looking my way.



## CANOE NIGHTS

Then and only then I realized my danger; for I saw they were in a big motor boat!

"Don't ram me," I shouted; "I'm sleeping here!" . . . And there I was sitting bolt upright in the canoe and mightily wrought up. But I found that I had cried out to the unanswering night; men and motor had gone—"in the land where the dead dreams go."

The water was slapping on the shoal; and from the east, out of which the wind still poured steadily and sent me rocking and swinging at my anchor, came also what I could not at once believe, the first signs of day.



## CHAPTER VIII

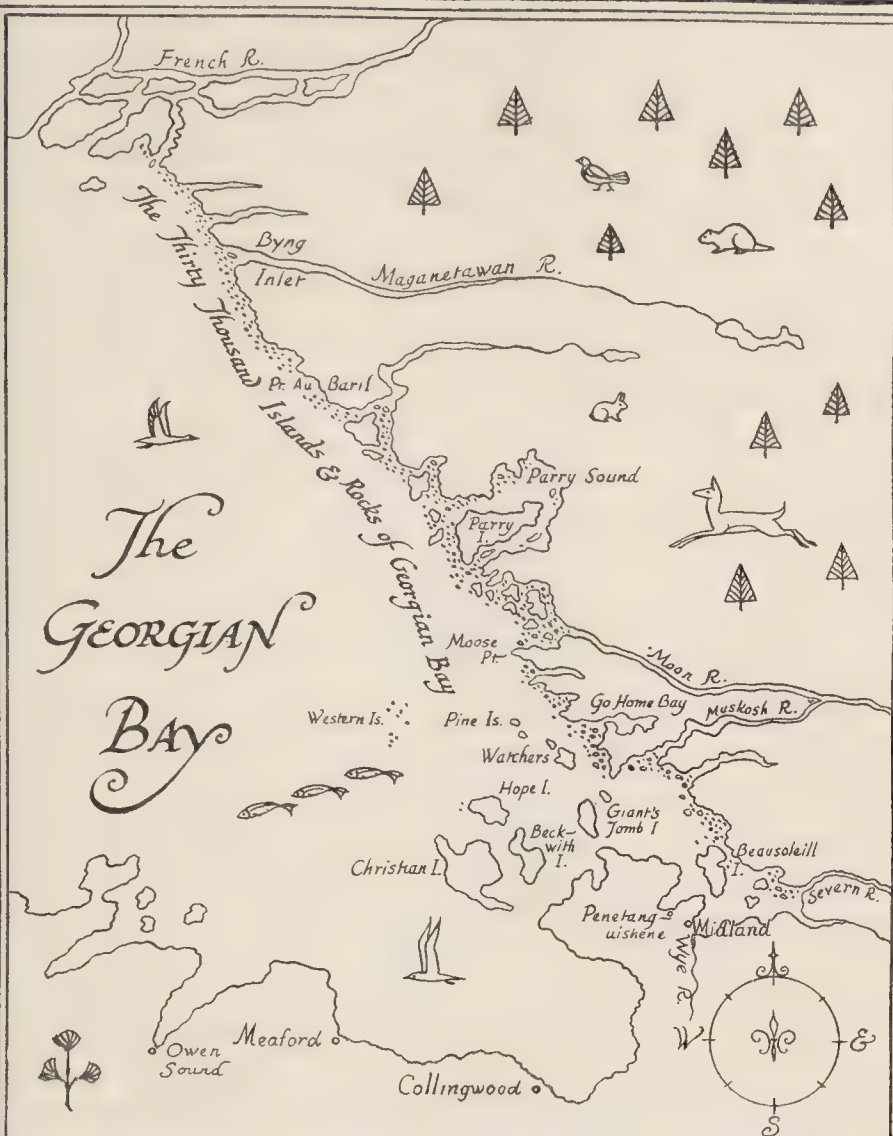
### THE SPORT OF THE WAVES

ON one of the lake expansions of a river flowing into the Georgian Bay I had an afternoon of play that I shall not soon forget. It was great fun. The hundred times that afternoon the canoe was within an ace of slipping out from under us—and didn't; or was within an inch of taking water—and didn't; I would not have missed it for thousands!

When we came out of the partly sheltered bay and saw the waves, discretion pointed a course to our destination three miles away by two sides of a triangle instead of by a straight line almost in the trough of the waves. I had never been in a more tottery canoe. My first bowload was a six-foot two-inch professor kneeling bolt-upright—only the polished surface where we were, got us to the other canoe, a Cunarder for safety compared with ours, without a ducking.

Then came the boy. Two days had partly accustomed us to that constant vigilance against

# The GEORGIAN Bay





## THE SPORT OF THE WAVES

a leap to one side or other of our skittish craft; and now on the tumbling lake we were heading out into the waves far enough on the first leg to give, when we turned, a wind full on the stern. The least inexperienced of the two, I gave orders. No help in steering could be expected from the bow. I have seen experts do wonders there in a storm, but not a novice of a hundred hours all told. So I did what seemed best; right or wrong, let the knowing ones tell.

“Never miss a stroke, Mephisto. Do instantly what I say.” (Odd how a pet name came out at that time before I knew it.)

On that leg, heading into the waves, the canoe rose and fell like a cork. Now and again the bow would fall from a big wave with a resounding whack that sent a shiver through the entire frame of it, but on the whole we could have crossed the lake in this direction with comparative ease, dangerous as it was. I was not so sure of what was soon to be before us.

When I judged we were out far enough, I watched for a big wave. It passed. Then I sank my paddle broadside to our direction, and Mephisto, nimbly biddable, flashed his to the other side. Round tottered the boat—it seemed

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

to me during those moments that the slightest extra pressure of a knee would have sent us over. Round we rocked, and the next big wave caught us full behind, lifted four feet of the bow clean out of the water, and took us along like a mill race. It seemed to hang an interminable time just in front of my thwart, the water an inch from the gunwales. The breaking noises of the curl of it were full in my ears. I could see the blue of it turning to a kind of brown where it broke into the white curl full of bubbles. It melted at last; the bow dropped, and we were tumbling on lesser waves.

I do not know the cause of these periodical big waves, but they put a fine edge on our play that afternoon. On the smaller ones we tipped and tottered, rose and dipped, so quickly that our breath came little and fast; then a big wave, with its curling top, would hang the boat out of the water and give us a long, smooth glide full of fearful joy. Every time one came, the canoe, hanging thus, seemed on the point of a curving, tipping shoot round into the trough. Often a full sheer was checked in the nick of time.

Altogether my paddle seemed an extension of my arms, joined to them by marvelously clever

## THE SPORT OF THE WAVES

devices. The blade would flash in the sun and then perform, almost automatically, deft and curious movements in the water that somehow kept the canoe dead ahead. Now and again it would change sides and play the same game, and the bow-boy—bless him!—would “never miss a stroke.”

And then I was aware of a strange thing. I was racing down the lake with a kind of double consciousness, if one can have such. Maybe I should say with two groups of ideas and feelings striving for the upper hand in a single consciousness—I wish the psychologists would tell me. Anyhow, uppermost in my mind was the thrilling thing in hand:—to hold the slippery canoe from shooting to the right or left in that turbulent water until we got to shore, even though our landing would be near half a mile from the spot we had set out for—the absorbing tension of it; the straining muscles; the breaking water; and the careening canoe, now tossed on the smaller waves, now hanging fearfully on the larger ones.

This, as I said, was in the center of my mind. But along the border there were what might be called the high-light ideas of a queer kind of reflection—as if a whole group were knocking at the gates; but owing to the intensity of the thing



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

in hand, only the stronger ones could find a lodgment even in the dim marginal region.

The dotted lines below indicate where the business in hand drove out everything; the words represent the ideas that found lodgment: . . .  
 dance with Death . . . enjoying it . . .  
 on his bosom . . . just over gunwale . . .  
 one mis-stroke . . . play over for ever . . .  
 joy of game.

Then a threatened sheer of the canoe would drive out everything but the ideas and feelings in connection with the danger—the hanging bow on the curled wave; the heave of the paddle; fear and a strange kind of gladness. But back would come the reflection: Columbus . . . unknown  
 . . . fun . . . Grahame-White . . . air  
 . . . fun.

I think the reflection had got to some kind of conclusion—unscientifically hasty, I admit:  
 . . . Duty . . . Truth . . . rule much  
 . . . fun . . . play . . . Art . . .  
 more . . . ; when I caught a remark from the bow. I forget what it was, but I know it struck me at the time as being more in keeping with a walk in a country lane than with our present situation. And at that I took the bit in my teeth and changed our course so as to catercorner the

## THE SPORT OF THE WAVES

waves right to the Maganatawan River at the end of the shining sand beach.

If we'd been having a straight run with Death, now it was to be a kind of serpentine march, for I did not yet dare to take the big waves aslant. In certain hands it might have been done; the feats of a canoe deftly managed are marvelous. I did not credit the story of a steam tug's meeting on Lake Huron, in a storm to the fear of foundering, an Indian family paddling a birch bark canoe with unperturbed minds. I believe it now in the light of experience. But that day on this lake, I balked at the big waves, and I think, after all, it added to our sport. It gave us the leanings to the tipping point and rightings again on the lesser waves; and then, with a supreme effort, the fetching of the canoe to take the big waves full astern and, to the sound of the swishing curls, be carried on the crests with an awful kind of glee. And always, in march or glide, down through the stormier water at the end of the lake, the terrible but fascinating partner hugged us close and added a strange zest to the sport, till the bow shoved into the packed sand and we were pulling to safety. The other canoe was still heading out on the first leg; it turned, and finally we saw the third man sponging out!

## CHAPTER IX

### A LANDLORD OF NO SCHOOL

**D**ONALD'S not a landlord by choice at all; the position's been thrust on him by circumstances, and I doubt whether he's altogether at home in it. Certainly he's not the typical one; but I think in many ways he's the better for that.

Years ago, he and Sandy, his brother, were net fishermen on the Georgian Bay, with a snug shanty, under a ledge of rock, giving on a quiet harbor,—all conveniently near the open water of the bay. A sister kept house. In those early days there was no thought of guests; but when the bay was discovered as a summer resort, gradually the fame of the genuine souls who would for a month or two give board to a few campers needing rest and play, spread far. A shelter was put up to accommodate the increasing number; an addition to that again; and finally a fifty-room building relegated the little fishing shanty into a quarters for the 'guides.'

## A LANDLORD OF NO SCHOOL

In and out among the gradually increasing number of guests went Sandy, the prime mover in the new business that had come almost unsought. "It came easy for him," Donald told me later. "In and out among them he was—aye. 'Weel, boys, what's to-morrow?' or 'What luck to-day, boys?'—jokin', givin' or takin' a suggestion, tellin' a yarn. Aye, Sandy could do it."

But Sandy died—slipped out suddenly one day, sitting in his boat; and the brothers who had grown up together in the Highlands of Scotland and had for years wrested from deep water a stern living together until this new business came, were separated. And what was full in Donald's mind at that sudden separation was not so much the new business as the old—the old counsels together, the snatches together of safe and warm shanty leisure set sharply over against exposure and cold, against wind and rain and sea.

But this was long before I discovered the place. When I landed from the steamer, Donald was pointed out to me as being in charge. I remember thinking that in that group of people on the dock, Donald was dis-

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

tinguished in a way. The utter absence in his clothing of anything that indicated summer struck me for one thing—no thought of impressing on boat passengers or others the idea of a summer resort; and it came in upon me with even greater force that among that group of shaven faces on the dock, Donald's neat full-whiskered one was a kind of relief. A spare medium-sized man in shirt sleeves, and peaked cloth cap, and used clothes. Spectacles, too, of that peculiar grinding and convexity as to suggest distorted eyes—a mistake, as I saw later, when to my, "I can get a room?" he answered with his characteristic Scotch "aye," and led the way. There was no office or clerk, nor is there to this day—no formality of registering. One enters the hotel as one would a private house, is introduced to Donald's wife, is shown one's room, and is given the same freedom one would have as the guest of a friend. . . .

No. Donald is not 'in and oot' among the guests. A certain instinct, perhaps a touch of shyness, makes him leave them pretty much to themselves. But he likes a talk informally and can give an opinion with great vigor and decision. I remember one morning on the dock,



## A LANDLORD OF NO SCHOOL

a half dozen men were admiring a very excellent new canoe that had come in the night before. "Gentlemen," cried Donald, stretching out his hand in a gesture, "if I had my way, I'd have every one of them broken to pieces wi' an axe. They're no the thing for this watter. Aye." An altogether fierce utterance, signifying great intensity of conviction. I was surprised. I have been a canoe man all my life; I had one with me at the time; moreover, I had talked with Donald about it a short time before, hinting of a pretty strong attachment between me and the tiny craft. "Aye," said Donald. "Attachment, aye." And the fun of it was I thought Donald was falling in with my idea; but after that explosion on the dock, I wasn't at all sure. Perhaps there was a meaning in the cadence of the Scotch "aye" that I did not get.

And this word "aye" that may mean so many things according to intonation is in a way characteristic of Donald. It is not only his favorite word, but the economy of it is like his speech. Putting very baldly and abruptly what he would think highly ridiculous, I should say that Donald is a born story teller, though I never heard him tell a story in the ordinary sense. But it came



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in on me after long acquaintance that this extraordinarily reticent man has the two prime requisites: an eye for the significant, and a certain intensity and brevity of utterance. They are part of the man's nature; they are elemental. He speaks in flashes, in vivid clipped phrases, punctuated under certain circumstances with "ayes."

"Aye, man. Many a time Sandy an' me—aff before daylight—oot to the nets—beatin' an' beatin'—and lookin' and lookin'—maybe after a big win'—to pick up the buoys. Aye. Wee things, ye ken, in a world of watter. Aye."

The experience seemed to have burnt itself on his mind so that even in memory it still glowed, and shot fire into gesture and eye in the telling. And generally it is the past that one gets from Donald in these snippets of talk.

"Logs? Logs, aye. When Sandy and me came first, *The Haystacks* were a' painted white—a mark for the tow-boats—fine deep watter—and the road doon to the Moon River—full, full—awa' doon—logs. Aye."

There comes regularly across the ocean from the Highland home, a local newspaper. With

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this in his hand and great excitement in his eye, Donald met me in the hall:—

“The paper frae hame,” he said. “An auld fairmer and his son chased by a bool. Weel, they rin, but the bool was gainin’ on the fairmer. So the son faced aboot. The bool came wi’ a rush. The son seized it by the horns—gied a long twust:—the bool lay dead at his feet!”

He stretched out his hands to indicate the fallen and defeated animal; then without another word, he went back to the reading; and that image of filial affection, courage, and brute strength flashed upon me by Donald’s dramatic telling, is vivid in my mind to this day.

An unerring ability to touch the significant is seen in all this, not only to touch it but to convey it—the very core of things. With the same unfailing accuracy he has his finger, quite unconsciously, I think, on the heart of his position as host on this Georgian Bay playground. The way it was revealed to me is in my memory still very fresh. It came spontaneously from the man, and could only have come from one whose heart was “in the right place;” and I confess it added much kindness to the brief leisure I, already a man touched with gray, was snatching from a busy life.

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We were having one of our accidental cracks in the sunshine, and in the shelter of a rock. Suddenly Donald was called.

"Ho! what's up?" came from him involuntarily; "I'm wanted, I must go." And then turning to me as he was off: "Noo, rin away and play, laddie; rin away and play." . . .

It sits on the point of a long narrow irregularly shaped island, this hotel of my landlord's, far on the outer edge of the fringe, yet in perfect shelter from big seas—they chose well in the old fishing days. On all sides the sky is visible from zenith to horizon; there are water stretches for miles; and the land to the east is low and unfeatured. One is much outdoors; all the processes of an empty world stare at one; and I was struck with the number of times the breeze on the very finest of days changes its quarter. I spoke of it one day to Donald.

"Aye," he said, and I thought there was even more than usual finality and mystery in the expression. "Aye," he repeated, looking upward, as if the great vault might give the solution of an unsolved problem. And then very simply: "It seems, sir, as if the face of the sky is never still. Changin', changin'—aye." A kind of

## A LANDLORD OF NO SCHOOL

reverent wonder was in the speech, as of a spirit long bathed in the elemental homelessness of the Georgian Bay airs—a resigned wonder, too, as if the keeping of the winds' secret were in good hands. So it appeared to me. I confess I wondered; for Donald is untutored save in the experience gained by living; and in this rare instance, I found myself likening his speech to

Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,  
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

A great fund of humor deep down in this man withal. Not often shown, perhaps, except with familiars and intimates; and my single experience of it was quite accidental. I was tinkering my boat in the little harbor one day when a party was putting off in a rowboat from the dock on the other side. I did not notice at first who it was. But suddenly I heard strange laughter. It was Donald's. He stood alone on the rocks, directing a mighty volley at the departing boat crammed with friends. Never before or since have I heard laughter like it. I was struck by the giant-like nature of it—an enormous thing of three or four notes in range, prolonged and renewed—a great masculine utterance, altogether humorous, but giving me, as I listened, a touch

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of awe. Here was a side of Donald I had never dreamed of—nor have I met it again.

“What’s up?” I said, as the boat passed.

“Oh, Donald’s laughing at us in Gaelic, I think.”

And I leave it at that.

## CHAPTER X

### A WET BREAKFAST ON A DRY STUMP

AS a canoeist, I relate this incident, trivial and all as it outwardly is (to the old camper a revelation, also, I am sure, of my ignorance in woodcraft), partly because of the influence it has had on myself and partly because I like to think that Champlain had a similar experience in the identical region. For that matter, what man, roughing it in the open, has not known the like?

When Champlain made that venture by canoe the first time from Quebec to Lake Huron, "the frightful, barren regions," from half way up the Ottawa to the mouth of the French, lay weightily enough upon his spirit. Two things kept him from thinking the whole a God-forsaken place. He saw even here "poor savages" (my quotations are from his diary) "provided with fish from the lake and game from the woods." They had, then, the necessities of life. But he saw more than this. "There are along the rivers a great



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

quantity of blueberries . . . and a great many raspberries and other small fruit, and in such quantities that it is wonderful." So that after all "God was in these frightful desert regions," giving to the "poor savages" not only necessities but even "refreshment in season"—a sort of luxury thrown in.

More yet. As if to ram the truth home, the experience touched him closer still. On the French (he speaks of it there, though it may actually have been earlier), where the country was still "more unpleasing than that before it, for he did not see along the river ten acres of tillable land," his own stock of provisions, through the early extravagance of his Indians, began to fail, and "the blueberries and raspberries helped us a great deal; otherwise we should have been in danger of want." It is not difficult to imagine, then, that if Champlain had not done so before, he would now, not by any dead heave, but by an easy slip, come back again to faith. Suddenly and sanely, to a half-starved man, even a patch of blueberries may become the symbol of an astonishing beneficence. . . .

Three hundred years after Champlain, almost to the very month, I was in the Lake Nipissing

## A WET BREAKFAST ON A DRY STUMP

and French River country voyaging by canoe simply and solely for fun. I had got the length of the Five-Mile Rapids on the French, and for my sin against the laws of voyaging, which for me enact that a man shall begin at four o'clock to look for a place to camp and that he shall set up immediately upon finding one, I was forced at sunset to stop at a hit-or-miss spot where the river took a quick turn and set off down a tumbling rapid.

As a mere site, a more unattractive place one could scarcely fancy. Rivermen earlier in the year must have been there by the dozens and for weeks. The little clearing in the spruce wood up the high bank was covered with their *débris*; and had not the sun been set, I should have been tempted to risk a camping place farther on. As it was, while my companion got supper, I carried the duffle a couple of hundred yards beyond the clearing up an old logging road and slung the tent between two trees by its side. Unhandy enough; but it had the fragrance of the woods; and the uninviting, messy place I had left at the landing gave it the attractiveness of clean quarters in a city after the slums. The very moment I stepped on the logging road, too, an odd shoot

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of pleasure ran through me, the origin of which I could not discover—like the partial fulfilment of an old forgotten happiness of the imagination.

The weather did not seem settled; and when things were all squared away for the night, I had just time to look at the rapid. The white part was very swift and tumbly; the noise frightening enough; and in two minds about risking a run next day at all, I walked back through the rapid-touched silence into the woods' gloom of the logging road and went to sleep.

When I awoke it was morning. The usual faint lemon light of it through the tent opening was intense—almost yellow. I wondered why. Then I saw that it was raining. My day to cook too; and I was scarcely upright from my sleeping before I had hunger. Out on the logging road, I had a momentary feeling, like the previous night's, that I ought to remember something fitting and pleasant. Only a moment. Full upon me was the staring fact that everything was soaked with the rain of hours and that although it was but late August, the air in that northern country was penetratingly cold.

I was not altogether a novice in the woods. I knew that birch bark would take fire fiercely,

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wet or dry, that certain soft woods were easily flammable, and especially that hidden in a decayed pine stump there was pitchy stuff with which one could defy rain. Down the logging road that morning, though, as I half shivered in the raw, wet weather, it came in on me that I was not in a pine forest at all, but in a spruce, and that spruce wood did not fire easily. If ever I wanted pine it was at that moment. All around the little clearing I trailed, in a partial lull of the storm, and on into the edge of the woods, looking for it. There wasn't any; and the only birch tree I could find was small, sickly, and stunted.

With bark from this I coaxed a flame to some spruce splinters out of the heart of a log. It was a feeble thing, and laid but a delicate and halting hold on the tiny area of my kindling. I watched it—those tense moments when it's nip and tuck between going and out; but a splash of new rain beginning at that time killed the thing dead. A thread or two of smoke went up for a moment and it too passed away.

Its little smoke in pallid morning died.

In a kind of defiant humor, I changed the immortal line.

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I do not know why but it came to me as I looked at the dead-out fire, that it seemed a pitiful thing in a way—that little clutter of sticks under the big and indifferent rain. There they were, white almost like paper in the wet, except where on each the blaze had made a blotch of black ringed with brown. This was blacker and browner now; but so hopeless had been my fire, that a single thin shaving from each would have taken every sign of it away. I was to be hard put to it for a hot breakfast.

If the whole place had been unattractive in the twilight of the evening before, it was utterly repulsive to my downcast spirit now in the rain of the slow-coming day. It was all such a beastly litter there under the near gray sky. A pair of thick old trousers hung sopping from a log not twenty feet off; and below them, half buried in the summer's grass, blowsy red stockings. The remnants of hay looked black and half rotten; the tumbled-about spruce logs were all rain-soaked; and from the far side of the clearing there popped up an empty box with the staring letters *Canada First* glistening in the wet.

"To the devil with Canada," I said, "if this is the kind of weather it keeps;" and that very



## A WET BREAKFAST ON A DRY STUMP

moment I heard for the first time that morning the noise of the rapid. It was dull and ominous; "never can run the thing," I thought.

I found myself a grouchy knocker. The "frightful barren region" didn't need rain anyhow. If there was anyone running the business, I could not see that he had cocked other than a malignant eye on my partner and me. Here we were, twelve days out, and already on seven of them it had rained. It was an outrage verging on the ridiculous. One with the least insight into human nature would have known that what we two temporary savages wanted at that time was breakfast—"hot, well cooked, and plenty of it, b'gosh!"—and here I was, the cook, in a pouring rain and no prospect even of a fire.

I know that all this went through my mind and was a true expression of one part of me. But there was another part and I think it had set my face to a look that said all fight was not out of me yet. I sat down on a log, took from the inside of my oilskin a tin box, and began zealously to grease my shoepacks; and when that job was done I got my axe—a tiny, hunter's one—and began again to search in the forest for wood, something dry and flammable. "If I only had a pine



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

stump! My kingdom for a pitch-pine stump!" I kept thinking up the logging road (What am I trying to remember about a logging road?) in the persistent rain, glad of the grease on my packs as I sloshed along. There was not the sign of one in answer to my wish; nothing on either side of the way but myriad, slim spruce trees, and the sound of rain on me, on the foliage of the road, and on the woods around.

Ten or fifteen minutes inland and just off the road, I gave up, and stood a minute at the turning. In a kind of desperation, I drove the axe backwards into a little spruce stump. It was probably a foot and a half high and eight or nine inches thick, all covered with brown punk. I tell you it was a mere random shot from which I expected nothing; I thought my axe would go through it as through a puff ball; but behold, there came off a sliver, dry, sound, and literally brown with gum!

The punk must have been nearly an inch and a half thick, a wrapping against the rain of decades. I do not know whether the roots of the thing went far into the ground or whether they had long ago gone to punk and earth again. I forget. I was in too big a hurry for cool ex-

## A WET BREAKFAST ON A DRY STUMP

amination; but I do not now remember that it was much trouble to gather every speck of it and start off down the old woods road.

Glory be! that was a find of a wet morning. I wanted to shout. And indeed I did; for at that moment a piece of song got into my mind—the very thing that had been trying to get through, from the moment I carried the duffle up the road the night before. And so uproariously enough I called out, “Robin down the logging road—” but there I stuck; for I remembered no more. Nor could I all the rest of the way down until I came to the edge of the clearing where there stared out at me first thing the box labelled *Canada First*; and with that the whole of my verse ran free and clear upon me.

It was all absurd, I admit; but I have come to think that sheer nonsense in some form or other always accompanies simple gladness; at any rate, hugging the bits of stump like a weapon of defense, I flung my song into the rain’s face that morning by the spruce forest, and to the lilt of it marking time, ‘sweet time,’ went lightfooted across the clearing:—

Robin down the logging road whistles “Come to me!”  
Spring has found the maple grove the sap is running  
free;

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

All the winds of Canada call the ploughing rain.  
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your  
love again. . . .

In the gray of that rainy morning there was something extraordinarily heartening about the flames of fire. The root lighted almost from the match. Rain could not put the flames out. And as I saw them swallowing the rain drops and licking heat into the pails and comfort into myself, and when later the smell of coffee and bacon was all about, there was that in me which could have poured itself out in gratitude. For I was simple enough to keep on thinking that someone had wrapped the punk about the spruce stump year by year, sealed gum in the heart's pores of it, and kept it dry and sound for me to make breakfast with in the rainy woods.

And because my miraculous find had changed me, my world had also changed. The gray colorless horizon of it a half hour before took on a brave hue. The trousers and stockings were soprier than ever; but the fun of it was now, I could see a Frenchman in them ride logs on the spring-flooded river and shout for the very joy of his peril. And as for the bit of old hay, it began to call up green fields; and I smelled

## A WET BREAKFAST ON A DRY STUMP

clover in the meadows of a kindlier region beyond the Mississippi.

And so you may guess that after breakfast—with appetite imperious and unashamed we ate it, standing in the rain—when the rapid sent its sound to my ears again, I knew I should risk it. The stuff was got into the canoe; strung with the fun of danger, we were sucked into the white tumble and the noise.

## CHAPTER XI

### JAKE

**I**T'S a far cry now to the night when caught in a squall off Split Rock Island in the lower part of the Georgian Bay, I first came into Jake's isolated existence. I stayed next morning overhauling my soaked outfit; then on into the afternoon; and I remember being struck with the loneliness and beauty of the place and wondering why he was there. He was not given to talk. In a sort of dumb way he seemed to take to me; once or twice I thought he was on the point of telling me something about himself; once or twice from the barest hints I thought I got a glimpse into some deep-seated aversion for the world he had left. Altogether, though, it was the better and more beautiful part of him that I came in contact with. I could not help thinking the serious way he looked at animals and birds was a little ridiculous; but the depths of the man's attachment to his surroundings, which I found out more by intuition than by

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speech—I can scarcely say how it came to me,—was almost uncanny. In all my experience I never met a man who seemed merged into them like Jake—silences and far water sweeps had gone deep into his life. It was with this impression of him that I went away.

When I came back to the Georgian Bay, three years later, a summer settlement was near Split Rock and Jake had gone. Great-hearted above the average I thought these men and women—perhaps Jake did, too, at the end. Who knows? They told me every detail they knew about him; and afterwards I went over the whole territory—into the deer lick, out through the channels, and finally over to his island. There in the going light, on a high bluff rock that gave on water to the horizon, I linked as best I could the Jake of my memory with the Jake they told me of at the club.

### I.

Out of the channel at the upper end of Split-Rock Island a canoe pushed its way westward one morning early in September and turned south along the shore of bulging, creviced rock. A white dog sat on the bow deck and a man in a bright red shirt paddled easily and slowly.



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Not a motion in the water. Suddenly there went through Jake's mind, by contrast, an image of that same canoe running before the wind, hung safe on a strong wave curled white. His eyes laughed—only a moment; the feel of the sun on his face turned them to the blue water, delicate beyond compare, and stretching indefinitely westward on Lake Huron, past distant islands—two purple headlands fronting, Gibraltar-like, north. Air, sweet to taste, its nipping coolness shot through with the warmth of a sun well off on its steep way, was all about him—bracing, magical. A clean thing for the clean; and he fairly panted it in. Joy in living seized him. Down went the blade deep in the water; and exulting in his strength and thrilling with the joy, he drove the canoe with a swish over the smooth surface.

“Great morning, Toby! Eh, old dog?” he said, after the spurt, exultation still in his voice. The dog put his paws on the middle thwart, and looked into the man's face.

A strange face under the battered hat and between the long hair—far older in appearance than it really was. High cheek bones—tanned; eyes glowing with pleasure; a full beard



“THE SPLIT ROCK THAT  
GAVE A NAME TO THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD”



## JAKE

sprinkled with gray—an unkempt, close-fitting Van Dyke of a thing, that made the thinness of the face more pronounced.

They passed the split rock that gave a name to the neighborhood, and got to the end of the island. It came in upon this man with a kind of pleasure that on that vast uninhabited shore, they were little and alone. Straight south eight miles, Coganashene Point hung in the horizon just above the water; the Giant's Tomb Island was out in the bay down there—a low hump, black in the young day,—more fascinating and enigmatical than usual seen through the vanishing haze of the morning.

The wonder of the sun and air and distance was upon him.

“Toby, we’ll make a day of it!” he said.

He went to a little harbor on the other side of the island, got the necessary things at a cabin in the edge of a broad, level space, and struck directly east to where a pine tree leaned on a high shore a mile away. At his left the water narrowed gradually to a channel that ran up Indian Harbor way; to the right, it kept its mile of width to distant Coganashene, and ran by a channel at the southeast end into Go Home Bay.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Indeed that shore he was pointing for was merely a fringe; beyond it lay island, water, foliage—a paradise.

Toby sat on the bow-deck as usual. A quarter of the way over, the man's eyes were blind to the beauty of the near world; he saw a well-clipped lawn and an old house.

"Better than back there—a thousand fold better." His lips were close, his face hard; the exultation of the moment before became angry depression.

In the channel by the big pine tree an easy wind blew. On either side, close in, lay masses of rock; beautiful and immovable it rose—rugged acres of color, gold brown, and lichenized gray, streaks of silver white. At a chiseled wall plumbed deep and high, a coolness cloaked him; he smelled the strange rock odor. He stopped, and on a level shelf lightly and half reverently laid his hand.

"What's it trying to say, Toby?"

For long the rock had had a quieting influence. First the colors and shapes had drawn him; but gradually and almost imperceptibly the endurance and serenity of it had laid hold upon him and brought a strange idea. It seemed as if

## JAKE

that rock were always on the point of whispering some great secret he was always just missing. He could not explain, but he felt that influence now. It quieted him and set his mood for the channels and islands among which he and Toby were to "make a day."

At another channel a mile beyond the first, over a wide bay, he fished. One cast—he could see the streak in the water, so shallow and clear it was;—then he landed the fish.

Where the water dropped fifteen feet deep from a rock, he had in the late morning a long swim. By a freak of nature the rock rose in a sort of natural steps parallel with the shore, so that he could take his plunge two to ten feet. He chose the ten; and having accustomed his body to the temperature of the water, as he knew by experience he always had to do, head foremost plunged. Toby followed from a lower level, and the two played. All about his body, inch on inch, the water laid itself, buoyant, smooth, cool; and when he turned to float, there was the quiet sun filling with light his quiet world. Then he noticed the dog had left him and was sitting on the rock.

"I know what you want, old dog," he said, swimming in. [ 113 ]



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

It had almost human pleasure at the recognition. The man kneeled, and the dog crept slowly and deliberately up his back and put his front paws about the man's neck. Grasping the dog's hind feet, the man stood on a ten-foot ledge and leaped into the water. They came up, Toby still clinging. He barked with the pleasure of it.

It was strange to see them when the man began to swim. The dog stood with his hind legs on the man's shoulders and the front ones on his head. Suddenly the man would dive—a long, strong dive; and Toby would scurry about, looking for the face above the water, and barking loudly when he saw it.

The man came out at last, found a smooth clean rock, hidden from wind and hit by the sun to a heat just bearable for the naked body. Here he baked dry, sun above and hot rock below—from head to foot his body was as tanned as his face.

In the shade of a cedar he spent a long, lazy noon.

Half a mile farther east the channel turned directly south by a bend of exceeding beauty. Unlike the "outside," the shores here were lined

## JAKE

with foliage to the water's edge. An islet stood in the middle of the channel. A pine like a cat-tail grew at its shore, and a low, underbrush one at its crown. This dark foliage lay on a background of light green aspens. Black rock peeped out here and there, and on a side opposite the long pine stood a group of white birches.

Farther on down the channel, after its turn to the right, he landed early in the afternoon, climbed one hill, crossed a valley—the wood all open, a floor like a carpet—and with great caution peeped over another ridge into a backwash.

Five ducks were at the end of his vision. A long, patient sneak, then the shot when one had separated itself.

A half hour later he was again looking for ducks.

The slough upon which he now peeped out cautiously ran north and south; the slow-dropping sun filled all his eastern side.

He waited. Sounds made by trees in the wind drew him. He knew that aspens rattled in the slightest movement of air, but that other trees required more. He got the habit of estimating the strength of the wind in this way.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

He had partly learned to tell, by hearing, even the kind of foliage he was near. He practised now. Aspens and pines came easy—broad contrasts in sound, a rattle and a flow. Not so with the others; but he kept trying as the wind moved his forest shore, and all its various noises came to him.

Suddenly in the midst of these came another—a distant quack. Then the sight of a duck, raised on its feet, its long neck stretched for a head of rice; then four others—all wood duck. Now he could hear the noise of their bills sifting out the grain. They were his—they seemed for him. The sun glinted on their smooth coats, and on the green, purple, and black of the male. They were beautiful—at his very feet. By accident he broke a twig near him—he saw the fear of the world come into their eyes; then he knew he was alone.

When they flew, the afternoon was well on. Straight into the woods the man walked alone, to a glade bordered by a swamp. At the edge of this, where the ground was licked bare and the deer tracks were in hundreds, he spread slowly and deliberately a few handfuls of salt; and on the other side of the open, but in plain

## JAKE

sight, he set up, in a high-pitched, clear voice, a cry that filled the glade and laid hold upon the forest stillness.

It was soothingly weird—such a cry as cow-boys may have quieted their herds with during a threatening night; a tone of anxiety was in it, but more of longing than anything else in the high prolonged “oo-oo-oo” with which it ended. The tall, bearded, motionless figure gave it once more, and then stood erect, with live eyes on the forest edge around. An almost infinite yearning was in that repeated cry.

Straight in front of him came the gentle sound of something in the bushes. He looked and listened. Out pushed the head of a doe—alert, with nostrils wide. After a little it limped over and began to lick, followed by a fawn. Then another doe and two fawn. The man had never seen so many. He watched long with this thought—“Would he ever be able to go in and out among them, stroke their necks, and feel their long, cold noses.” The eyes that watched were quiet and kindly, but they blazed and his hands clenched at a fleeting thought of harm coming to these creatures.

A doe left the group and limped over to the

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

man for a stroking. With it by his side he tried to approach the others; but they made off shyly; and it was three years since, with the doe then a wounded fawn, he began the effort to tame them. He stroked the pet deer again and turned to the road out; it followed him a short distance, stood still and watched him out of the glade.

Toby took his place on the bow for the trip home. The sun was at the horizon, the wind had fallen.

"Not an aspen moving, Toby," Jake whispered.

In that deep channel, the shadows were already clear. All the little island with the birches floated double; and along the shore he could not tell where shadow ended and reality began. Every color, every tree, every rock, every leaf,—there it was again, deep or shallow, in the water's cool heart; through it all the man went with hushed paddle and quiet mind.

When he came to the indentation at Split Rock and drew up the canoe, twilight had disappeared. He fed Toby and made his way to the other side of the island. A slip of moon and near it a large star, both clear-cut in the naked sky, rode above the dark Giant's Tomb; across



## JAKE

the water, the purple of the headland islands deepened on the very last of day.

Level water, frowning headlands, mysterious Tomb, became indistinct—faded; the new moon dropped, the star remained.

### II.

The next day a tug rounded Coganashene Point for Go Home Bay, leaving its long trail of smoke. What troubled Jake most was that it did not come out that night. He watched long but he saw no lights. Next morning he could discern above the rock shore a faint line of smoke; it was still there. By afternoon he could stand it no longer; he and Toby pushed off in the canoe to find out the cause.

He learned from workmen on the tug that two men had come up with government surveyors to mark the limitations of a long piece of shore line to be used for a summer club. They were to have the islands, too.

The site chosen for the club house was far in—at the end of Go Home Bay; the work on it began the following spring; and with the summer months, even before it was completed, the tourists came.



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

All this brought a new life for Jake. In all that wide region for years he had been, save for Toby and the wild things, alone. The whole place had seemed his. Now it was different; others had come—people; and he had fled from people—and, as if by right, had simply taken possession. He could not go into the inner channels without seeing them—the men in gay caps, the women in summery costumes,—and their loud laughter and shouting seemed a desecration.

“Damn them, Toby! Damn them, I say!” And he would turn away from his fellow men with a hot heart and go out to Split Rock and quiet.

Weeks passed. This group of men and women from the cities, turned loose in a paradise of game, forgot themselves or never knew. He saw many of them—and for him these represented the whole club—fish hour after hour merely for the big catch; he heard desultory guns, in season and out, and believed that behind them were eyes filled with the civilized lust for killing; and though they had not yet found his pet deer, try as he would, he could watch the glossy, flashing colors of a duck no more.

Anger rose in him; not altogether a righteous

## JAKE

anger as he thought; in part it was a jealous cankering thing, out of black deeps where it lay stifled, not dead. It embittered his spirit more and more and made him look even upon little things with a jaundiced eye. Once in a channel five miles from the club house he came upon a party confused as to direction. He pointed out the way; but try as he might, the snigger of a careless girl rankled long in him.

The black future surely coming when he would have to leave these surroundings that had laid themselves about his life gradually brought hours when he lost altogether his pleasure in them, filled him with gloomy thoughts, even suggested dark ways whereby he might be rid of the whole new crowd. These last thoughts would come at different times and places: at twilight on Split Rock, his companion star above his head all unnoticed; at midday, far in among the islands, all unseen the sun making a broad white way from rock to rock;—but wherever and whenever they came, his scowling face would turn towards Go Home, and an ugly look would be in his eyes.

Then quite suddenly something would pierce through his angry depression: maybe the trailing

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

note of a bird-song that had been above his head for the last half hour or more, maybe a patch of clear sky or a green water space shot through with purple—one of these would find its way into the centre of his consciousness to be followed in a rush with the whole of that other life. It would possess him again to the exclusion of all else.

Old human things would then take place—remorse and a dumb confession. Like a sorry child to its mother or a sin-struck soul to a priest of God, this man would come back from his wanderings, and the same form would hold a different person.

So the days went. He was now one man, now another for hours at a time; and it became more and more difficult for touch of color or patch of sky—for anything—to bring him again to himself.

At noon one day in late August he paddled over to the channel by the big pine tree. The air was still; the sun shone thin; a storm seemed to be slowly gathering.

For a day or two there had been little sight of the tourists; there had been no reports of guns. But all that morning there had been a

## JAKE

fusilade, first from up Indian Harbor way, then straight in from the big pine tree. What did it mean?

At the second channel he came upon a group of three people fishing.

"Want any fish over your way?" they called gaily. "We're having a match to-day—ten on a side; and we've caught forty already. Never can use half our catch; better take some."

He did not want any.

He paddled slowly and grimly through the narrow channel, on past the sand beach, past the old swimming place—not since the year before had he used it. He had been breathing the atmosphere of the change since then; it had got to the very marrow of his bones.

The gunning now seemed to come from the long slough where he used to watch the ducks. Once from farther in came the sharp report of a rifle. He drew the canoe into the bushes and by a roundabout way came to a rock that overlooked the slough from the farther end.

Below him, a single man in a canoe was pushing about among the rice. At that moment a flock of five ducks was raised. The man fired and missed. The ducks separated coming to-

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

wards Jake, joined at his end of the slough, got their bearings, and started down it for open water and safety. Four times on that flight down, a white smoke burst from a clump of bushes, and each time a duck fell.

It was a kind of unspeakable thing to Jake; his crowded mind came out in gasps of utterance:

"All morning at it! Another match! . . . Their glossy coats and wild eyes."

He leaped on a rock in full view, his eyes blazing.

"Butchers!" he shouted, his fist uplifted.

They heard him not; the man in the boat saw him and waved towards him a hand.

Then with a thought of this tide of civilization inevitably beating out his old life of silence:

"I simply can't buck against it!" Jake uttered.

He went into the mainland—where high ovals of ridgy rock-acres, scattered with dead wood, lay bare to sun and sky; where fine dense foliage shut in patches of flat rock, moss-damp to the very center; now and then through a swamp, now and then under a group of pines. Quieting all else—even his rising anger,—the odors of his way seized him: the woods-earth smell of low spots; pungent cedar; pine needles; and that in-



## JAKE

describable odor of the high places, where smell of warm rock mingled with that of old gray wood slowly, by decades, drying up—the whole breath of this still wilderness day.

Familiar ground added to his pleasure in the woods—the road to the deer lick. He would go in, give the call, and see the pet doe and her companions again. He was in that state where he could almost believe the old days were back—had never changed.

Again the cry was given, begun a second time, but stopped short. He ran forward fifty yards and fell upon—two dead deer!

They were not yet cold. His hand went gently over the heads of both, dwelt on their noses, then ran along their sides. Not a sound came from him. Where a soft-nosed bullet had ploughed through each behind the shoulder there was a gaping wound. He ran his finger into it on each.

Then he rose—beside himself—another man. The very form of his face had changed. He seemed mere skull to which the white skin clung drawn.

Long after midnight he, with Toby under the bow, was nearing the club house to burn it.



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

The whole place like himself was still as the dead. Even at the landing the canoe on the rock made no noise. There was no hesitation. Bidding Toby remain perfectly still, he took three rolls of birch bark from the canoe and by easy steps made his sure way up the incline, at the top of which the club house had been erected. At the corner he began to lay a fire.

The building was raised on large blocks, except this corner, where was still lying workmen's debris. With great care and quietness he selected some of this and placed it over his birch bark.

Then a call came. With a suddenness that was both startling and arresting, sharp and clear it broke out of the dark—a night-bird's cry, random and accidental—; yet it touched him, touched lightly that other part of him now smothered under consuming anger, stood for a faint voice from another life. He looked where the sound of the night bird had been, and in a rift of clouds saw a single star, like his very companion that every evening rode alone for a time in quiet above the Tomb.

With something of the look in it that turns souls from the edge of the Pit, Jake saw, through

## JAKE

this star in the rifted cloud, the eye of that old life upon him, felt that life surge in upon him, and accompanying it, with a vividness that dazzled him, where he was and what he was about to do.

The match dropped from his fingers. Still in a dazed way he gathered the birch bark and got into the canoe. Rocks were on either hand; instinctively he picked his way and was soon heading out by High Rock at the entrance of Go Home Bay.

Again it came over him—what he had been about to do. There, in the night, his head in his hands, the horror of it sent through him shudder after shudder.

. . . "to burn a house filled with human beings . . he, he, he, . . . children, too."

How had it come about? Paddling again, he went in thought back over the days of alternating anger and calm, until—was it only yesterday—he had come upon something;—that was it—those two deer—once so nimble, with their half trusting eyes, coming at his call—now dead! The sight must have maddened him.

How long he paddled out into the infinite dark he did not know. Twice Toby had risen from

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

his place in the bow—once he had whined; but no friendly recognition came from that fixed face. Then thunder broke and the storm came—miles out on Lake Huron!

First the waves were short. They grew larger and larger. To see better, he had thrown off his battered hat, and his long hair blew out in the wind.

Now he was on a crest, peering into a dark and oily-looking hollow; now a flash would discover him on the upward slope, the bow of his canoe far out of the water, and himself looking up the slanting surface into the sky.

He strained on.

During every flash he saw the same things; in a circle of great seas, his little all—a glinting paddle blade, the apex of the canoe, the three coils of birch bark, and Toby—white Toby—wide eyed and fearful in the bow.

“Toby must be saved” kept running through his mind.

But back of the irregularly recurring image stamped with each flash, back of his pity for his dog, there never left him in light or dark, the picture of himself discovered at the club house, in the act of setting it on fire. And when, after

## JAKE

a long fight, calm came with a drenching rain, and he ran on the ground swell to where in the darkness lay Split Rock and home; when the cater-corner roll to round a reef strained every nerve, took every ounce of strength, was worse than the storm at its height;—through it all that image was with him still; he heard the call of the night bird and felt in his fingers the criminal incendiary's match. Out of the gloom a darker gloom arose—an island; even in the quiet behind the rocky cover, that insane deed no skill of his own had saved him from, bowed him again shudderingly low.

The dog put his feet on the middle thwart and whined.

“Toby, we must go away—find another place—to be alone.”

The faintest possible light was in the east—a new morning!

### III.

Two days afterwards a canoe containing a man of middle-age and a little girl landed at his wharf. A paleness was below the new tan on the man's face; they walked up the rock to the cabin.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Jake had just returned from the salt-lick where he had gone to draw the two deer into the swamp and give them a rude grave; but they had been taken away. It was his last trip "inside." Extraordinary clearness and beauty was in the world; he had been frequently reminded of that other time before the coming of the club, when he and Toby had "made a day of it."

"Good morning," said the newcomer, "fine level spot you have here."

"You have come to tell me that you have got Split Rock," Jake said quietly.

"I—I—; but there is no hurry for your leaving."

"I am going to-morrow."

"Of course, there isn't any great hurry; though, of course, you know I should like to build my house this fall; and large as the island is, you know a place is never big enough for two families."

"I will go to-morrow."

"Great thing, this simple life," the newcomer said, breathing deep of the pure air. "Got to have it these days. I have come a long distance to get this."

"Yes," Jake said, and wondered what the man meant.



## JAKE

"Strange old stump on the top of that rock," the man said, pointing to Jake's mark across the bay.

"It's an old pine," was the answer. "It has stood long and has made many noises."

The stranger looked at him, all doctor.

"Been long here?"

"Many years," Jake answered, and the non-communicativeness of him was evident on that score.

"Well, I'm going. No hurry, as I said before. Come, Mary."

"Father, may I paddle going back?"

"Oh, I guess you may. I used to paddle a great deal on the river when I was at college," he said, addressing Jake.

"This is not like river paddling," Jake answered. "One must always watch here. Even now there is quite a chop."

Something in Jake had attracted the girl; she held out her hand to say good-bye, and his hand remembered it to the last. The girl had an odd life preserver on—one made to strap on the shoulders, but now buckled crudely round her breast.

"By the way," said the visitor, "great fishing



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

and hunting around here; I got two deer at one shot over on the mainland."

"At a glade, in from the second channel?" said Jake. He spoke low and very deliberately, and seemed another man. Yet the difference was only in his eyes. From being dull and inaccessible, they had come to be bright and deep.

"Yes; at a kind of deer-lick; all tracked up," the man answered.

Jake's hand closed to a fist; he felt small fingers and opened it at once.

"They stood together, team-like, and you shot from the end of the glade?" he continued.

"Yes, how did you know?"

"I—found—them—there—three—days—ago. I—had—tried—to—tame—them. The sight of them dead—possessed me—made me try to burn—your club house."

"You need not shrink," he said. "I was prevented—never mind how. I know now I was wrong; but as for you, sir, I bid you good-day."

He turned and walked to the cabin. Full-throated above his head a bird sang.

A little later, Toby barked at the shore towards the east, ran to the door and back again, still barking. Then Jake saw—the canoe had overturned.

## JAKE

Two minds were in him. One with the image of the dead deer kept saying, "Don't go;" but even as he heard it thus speak, another and a more elemental one drove him to the water where his own canoe lay. Toby leaped on the bow, and the canoe went with a rush.

The upset was probably near half a mile out; and already he could see the girl struggling in the water. Half way out, he could see she had ceased to struggle and was held up by the ill-adjusted preserver, though her head was under water. He lifted the unconscious child in, then went to the man, who, not knowing how to swim, was clinging to the upturned canoe. As Jake neared, the man left the boat and was about to lay excited hands on the coming boat.

"Listen," shouted Jake. "Go back to your boat. Hear me? I'll smash you with this paddle if you don't."

There was no mistaking that voice, and the man went back. But even in the going it was evident to Jake that the other's strength was exhausted.

"Now hear me," said Jake. "If you attempt to get into this canoe now I'll have to drive you off by force and you'll drown. But if you do what I say, I may yet save you."

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

It was no easy task to do what Jake had promised.

Thinking that in the other's possible helplessness he might have to tow, Jake made a noose in the long painter at the stern, slipped it around his waist, put his hands on the gunwales of the boat, and carefully lifted himself, ending with a spring that dropped him on his feet by the canoe's side. It was neatly done; the child at the bottom was scarcely moved.

"Listen," Jake called out, "get into this canoe. Take hold of the side and bring yourself up by your hands until you can roll in. I will hold it so that the gunwale is just above water. Be careful; it's a kind of swarming roll."

Bit by bit he gave directions and got him in—a perilous thing.

"I'll swim behind and partly push."

The little wind there was blew against them and the man paddling was weak—but they made good progress.

Suddenly Jake was aware he could move neither leg; he grasped the stern and held on—a dead weight. The man paddled a moment longer and gave up; the canoe drifted into the trough.

## JAKE

"I'm all in," he said.

"And I'm dead weight here. I've taken cramps; the sudden jump into cold water; I forgot."

"Couldn't I get out?"

Jake knew with a surprised gladness that the man meant it.

"I couldn't get in with these legs; and to attempt it with you there is worse."

"Try it; all's risk now."

The man leaned far over one side, and Jake lifted himself preparatory to swarming over the other. A sudden drawing in of the man's body too far when Jake's weight was partly off disturbed the balance when the weight was in a moment on again—the boat came near to upsetting. It took some water.

The sight of it about the girl's feet brought him to his senses.

"It won't do," he said.

Both looked at the upturned canoe drifting east.

"No hope there," said Jake; "It's too far; beside, she must be restored soon or never."

The other knew that too well. A groan escaped him.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Then Jake held on with his left hand and struck out with his right, while the man paddled. They thought they saw progress; and, strung by the look of death, these two, both in exhaustion, one in killing pain, laid themselves unto their feeble utmost to this single hope.

At their second breathing spell, they knew it vain. Their power had gone from Jake's limbs. The man on his knees, drooped low, looked blankly at his unconscious child. Jake looked at both; and the kind of pity he had for Toby in the storm was on him.

"Try it now," he called, letting go the canoe.

Slowly the boat moved towards the shore, but stopped when at the rope's end his own weight dragged. He drew himself in.

"Let's at it once more together," the man cried excitedly.

With a tone of far off wonderment and a touch of formality, Jake said:

"Sir, why all three?"

As one who saw true and had made up his mind, he was moving the girl nearer the bow to be out of the water. At the same time he took a knife from its place in the boat. The pain in his limbs and body was almost beyond bearing.



## JAKE

What he did was instant and decisive; he laid the rope across the stern and cut it.

He heard the cutting, saw the knife make its quick way through—a quarter, a half, three-quarters—the canoe was free of his dead weight. For a moment he held the knife; then he pitched it from him.

“Try it now,” he said.

The man in the boat had seen all—knew what it meant.

“God knows, I could take your place,” he said.

“I know it, now,” Jake answered; “but you’ve somebody; and after all, my place is the easier. . . .”

“Toby’s hers,” he said suddenly.

Tears came to the other’s eyes. He took up the paddle.

Slowly distance came between Jake and the thing he had been holding—his canoe. There came upon him such a love for all he was leaving that he had to steel his mind to keep from striking out madly with his hands and going down finally in the beast’s struggle.

That passed and his mind became quietly objective. Even from the level he could see the old gleaming way to the sun; it was not yet noon,



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

and the world was full of light. The air?—even now he drew it in as on that morning in old days—a clean thing for the clean. . . . There, across the bay was his old pine tree, still bowed low to the quarter of the morning. . . .

He heard short, hurried breaths behind him.

"Toby, old dog, why did you come? Do you see them, Toby?—the headlands and the Tomb?—just speaking, Toby,—everything's trying to say something."

At a glimpse of the boat nearing the shore gladness came.

Toby was swimming round and round him; now he put a paw on Jake's shoulder.

"Come on, dog," said Jake.

Toby barked with delight, climbed on Jake's shoulders, and put his paws on his head. In the feeblest imitation of his old strong dives, the man let himself sink into the water to come up and find a dimness in the world and to hear Toby's near bark of recognition.

"Toby, listen—you're a girl's now . . . home, Toby . . . the star and the Tomb—just speaking."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TRAFFIC POLICEMAN OF THE WATERS

**I**T happened at the end of a canoe trip. The evening before, because I would not risk a delicate canoe a railway journey of three changes, I had parted from two of my companions of a three-hundred-mile cruise (the third had left a day earlier) and set out by myself thirty miles or more down the Georgian Bay to the nearest boat landing.

To get there as quickly as possible somehow laid strong hold on me. The holiday was about ended; the "boys" were off to their work, mine was waiting for me; I must, then, as the Indians say, make the trip "in one sleep." True, there were big Lake Huron places open to the prevailing wind quarter, where if one got held up, one could never make it in that time. Nor must one get caught; and to avoid hold-ups, one must use every inch of daylight and mayhap some of the dark. Therefore, no dawdling. Get it over with. And after that intimate fellowship of

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three weeks I was pathetically lonely,—all the more reason for having done with it. “In one sleep” became a kind of obsession.

Filled and all as my mind was with this idea, I still wonder at the intensity of my rebellion when, some time after noon the next day, nearly twenty miles down, I had to stop. A three mile stretch, an hour’s paddle, perhaps, would have brought islands and a long quiet run to the landing by dark. But this stretch open to Lake Huron was, even in that light summer wind, beyond me. I tried it. Yes, indeed. But when with four or five inches of water in my laden canoe I barely succeeded in making an island an eighth of a mile down, do you think I was thankful? Not a bit of it. Thwarted in my purpose, I could have shaken my fist at the universe.

I emptied the water and looked about. The island ran fast up from my side to a ridge, then went slowly to the edge of the open lake; eight acres, I guess—sprawling and a little elongated, if I remember aright,—a mile or two from the main land. And save for a few stunted pines scattered at one end, and a hollow of dead grass now and then, it was bare rock.

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"Confound it!" I said, after a part round of the place, "I could have been half way over by this time."

I tried to sleep but couldn't. Sounds of wind or wave, soothing heretofore, but reminded me of my delay, kept dinning it into me. I gave up trying and went to the top of the ridge.

Never man more out of touch with his surroundings. The granite rock on which I strode might well speak of calmness: it saw the world born, the scraping glacier since, Indians and Champlain. To have heard would have been an appropriate response. I did not hear. Even for the sweetest air that ever blew, my impatience had no taste, nor any eyes for the trebly brilliant light that set the whole empty lake gleaming clear to the horizon, that even made the sky part white.

Then I hit on something which if I had not been in so deep would have taken me clean out of my perturbed state. My eye caught a board on one of the pines.

"Now who would warn a man off this god-forsaken island?" I thought.

But instead of a warning I read a tragedy: 'that the schooner' (spelled sooner) '*Jane Mc-*

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

*Leod*—E. D. Cameron, master—had been wrecked on that island on Nov. 12, 18..’—the last two figures were actually worn away by wind and rain.

The mind of any normal unperturbed human being would have brimmed with images at these words. It would have seen, at least, that November day of cold and tumult, when the *Jane McLeod*, forth from many a harbor, rigged and laden, brave and pretty, here came to her end. It might easily have gone further and reflected a little. How men take to ships, say: give them names (the *Jane McLeod*—think of it!); gladly believe them feminine and tricky; humor them, love them, think (sublime foolishness!) they must die with them.

None of this came to me then. No imaginative human sympathy. I had only the consuming desire to be off—end my loneliness, get the thing over with. I walked up and down restless and bitter.

“In Heaven’s name, am I never to get on?” I would cry out.

Once, topping the ridge, from being down at the water’s edge to see forsooth if the waves were not really small enough for me (in the little



## TRAFFIC POLICEMAN OF THE WATERS

wind and glittering sun, the surface, from the ridge, seemed scarcely wrinkled), I had another surprise. A big steam barge, looking straight at me, sat on the water. In out of the open, right under the sun, it came, very quietly, straight east for my rock—in that empty world and to my startled sense, a kind of apparition—; a half mile out turned south a leg, and then straight east into some hole in the mainland.

Here again, for what this cried aloud of Cameron, how in the hard and heavy wind of November he must have tried to make the first turn and couldn't, I had no conscious ear. Nor did it come in on me that if one would know how, like him, many have suffered on this Georgian Bay, one must let the wrecks of its long coast, striking terror even in memory, tell. What seemed to be full upon me was a kind of hot envy at the undisturbed, level-keeled way of the big thing. It could go easily on, and I couldn't.

But something of the other may have been knocking at my mind. I remember that when I came to the weathered board again, fear of riding the same water in a craft of less than fifty pounds was on me in a kind of panic. Not long.



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For what in my anxiety should I shortly afterwards do but strike out again in that selfsame craft.

Not in the direction I wanted to go, though. I had cooked some food and was ready for moving again, just as the sun set. I saw it, full and fiery, at a red path's end from my very feet. But, "Why the devil doesn't the wind go, too?" was my only thought. There wasn't a sign of calm. The loneliness and bareness of my position were on me to the full, and for nearly an hour I had been pestered by mosquitoes. I began to look longingly towards the mainland. Then suddenly I decided to run before the wind for it; if I had to spend the night in the neighborhood I vowed it should not be on that haunted, outlying island.

I raced right by a rock where I had hoped to land should the passage prove too rough. When I was half over, a motor boat popped out of nowhere. 'How far had I come?' and then 'Wasn't I a fool to be out?' I did not answer. And when a wave took the boat quartering and slapped the man full in the face as he waved his hand, I rather rejoiced at it. "Serve him right for not minding his own business," I grouchily thought.

## TRAFFIC POLICEMAN OF THE WATERS

It was dark when I turned the point of an island into a channel—and a great quiet. Even as I write I can feel that stillness, set sharp over against the canoe-tumult I had just left. It must have permeated every part of me—except my mind. For when well down that narrow way I found a level spot by a patch of bush to spread my blankets on for sleep, it was with the same soreness of spirit, the same sense of antagonism that had been with me all afternoon, that I lay down.

I wakened while it was yet dark, I think in the same eagerness to go on I had lain down with; for I was staring wide awake in a second. The startling suddenness of that awaking I did not notice then, but when with the same suddenness I knew, from the sound of the waves, not only that I was still held up but that there was a trifling change of wind, I began, in spite of my anxiety, to wonder. I had not the night before consciously noted the waves; how was it then that even (if that were possible) before I remembered last night's shift of ground, I knew of that change in the wind's quarter? And it came in on me with a kind of shock that to a certain extent I must have remained alert

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throughout the night; that prone and quiet under the sky though I may have been during the previous dark hours, a part of me had never slept.

Now whether I was right about this or not does not matter. The thought did come to me. Moreover it touched me; and with it the light of common sense—a mere fountain-jet of it—pierced my mind. From that moment, I believe, the eagerness and excitement began to subside; I was set on the road to a wiser and pleasanter mood.

Faint light of day, too, across the narrow water and up over a dim outline of land. It spread; to the little channel gave definite form, and revealed the gray rock beyond with tangles of dead wood and the blurr of scattered trees. Watching it take possession of the world, I lying there propped on an arm was aware of a change in myself.

Only the effect of it am I able to tell. I knew now I'd be there another day, perhaps two, maybe more; I saw what I had planned to do at home—yesterday so important—put off for the same time. But it didn't seem to bother me much. I began, glory be! to laugh at it in a kind of way.

## TRAFFIC POLICEMAN OF THE WATERS

"After all, it *is* the universe that stops me," I thought. "Nothing weak or small about the 'No' of that hand," I continued rather grimly; "that ought to salve my pride and ensure my self respect. I might carelessly have stove a hole in my canoe or I might in the same manner have sprained a wrist." . . .

I can't remember anything else. But this I know: that by the time morning had fully come, I had completely given in and the change was immense. I was on friendly terms again with the world. A certain coolness had touched the hurried pulse of my desire; instead of rebellion, the deeps of my life held a great peace.

Just here, breaking the thread of my narrative, I tell of an interesting coincidence. On the same day of this experience of mine, one of my companions of the recent cruise, already speeding west of Chicago, back to family and work, was writing me of a similar frame of mind in himself.

Of the situation that gave rise to it I know nothing. It was his first cruise and a hard one; we had trying delays and sheer toil. And when, five days behind a rough schedule, we came, near the end of the trip, to where we could break up,

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he left, one day before the others. I thought then and many times afterwards of that trying initiation; but to have learned what his letter shows, was worth it all. This is what I read in my first mail:

“Since then” (the time he left) “I have still more caught the spirit of the camper. He must not be hurried. If he have a family—he must see in advance that they are well fixed—he must make them no hasty promises about letters or his return—and he must then give himself over whole-souled to his new mistresses—the wood and the water, (use this to help neophytes.)”

Well, from my own experiences I'm trying to do what he asks, not for neophytes alone but for us all. “We must give ourselves whole-souled to our new mistresses, the wood and the water.” Wise words. One thing sure, they contain an essential condition of a successful canoe trip. For if the men composing it persist, except in a general way, on taking the calendar into the woods, the fun is marred from the beginning. Sooner or later the cruise begins racing against time—and then goodbye to play.

The words of my companion have wider application. Year by year work tends to draw



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us more and more in. Purposes, noble enough, enmesh us: provision for age; desire to tide the business over a crisis; something for the folks if one should slip suddenly out—and so and so on, until if we do not fight the tendency we cannot altogether “give ourselves up,” we cannot any longer really play. And it’s all so amazingly foolish.

That is why I here pay my tribute of respect to the magazines that by their emphasis on the play spirit are combatting this tendency. Their work is, I sometimes think, even greater than they themselves know. For urging men into the remote open as they do, there to see truly and respond appropriately to the elemental passions of men and the unchangeable processes of nature, they stimulate and nourish, in one form or other, a perspective of life that is at once the highest culture and our country’s greatest need.

For mark you, even in the woods we slip the perspective. My companions of the three previous weeks were nature men in the thick of life; we had gone with something of the touch of youth on us, into the woods to play; yet there are the words of one admitting that he had not really done so; and here had I, far from the play



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spirit, been rebelling fiercely at what was really a call back to it.

And because I "gave myself up," I am able to look at the day of enforced habitation on the little island as one of the best. I am not going to tell in detail what I did. What could I do? Outwardly, it was a pretty dreary day. But after all is that ever the right way to look? I have read somewhere of boys haunting old boats at night on a sea coast, in rain and wind and cold. It was a sorry sight, apparently; but really they were in the seventh heaven of happiness because each, under his great coat, had a bull's-eye lantern—lighted.

Take it as you will that, in a way, was my case; an inner lantern had been rekindled, and behold! a contented laughter even at the upright prohibiting hand. . . .

When at that early awaking I found I could not go on, I went back to bed, the change full upon me, and lay till sunrise. Then I had a plunge in the narrow quiet water. I remember it well. It was delicious to every inch of my body. I headed far up the channel for very joy; I stretched out motionless and stared with a kind of child-like wonder at the big sky; and plough-

## TRAFFIC POLICEMAN OF THE WATERS

ing back, I saw the sunlight on the upper part of my bush clump, and down below, the gray shore and some dark pines night-cool and still. . .

By mid morning it began slowly to cloud up; at noon it threatened rain and the wind had freshened. I found I could sling my tent over the exact spot I had slept on the night before; and with that up I made myself a pot of tea to take with my biscuits and marmalade. The freshened wind touched my tree-tops and at my back, far away outside the bay was roaring; but everything was snug down where I sat. A low ridge of clean white rock fenced me from the channel, though a few feet to right it petered out to level with the water. Frettings from the open bay touched this to tiny wavelets and little shore lappings; and off south I could see the waves pouring into the Sound, and the far, blue shore of Parry Island. And by the embers of my little fire, to sit eating with enjoyment in such surroundings gave me a serenity and self possession I do not often acquire. I had lost the fierce and the aggressive ego of yesterday, but it seemed as if I had gained the world. For me the ancient heavens were fresh and strong again;

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I saw that clean, pure-aired playground of the Georgian Bay—all the bleak, rugged beauty of it—with the joy of discovery. Little ordinary things were big and wonderful. Even the tea I was drinking seemed an incomparable gift. There by my primitive hearth I fell into a vein of musing on tea (you may read of these musings in a subsequent chapter); and suddenly all the pleasant homely firesides of the world came into my mind, the aroma of womanhood, and the little and kindly leisure of men.

Into this quiet and content came the noise of a duck—a single quack. Was it a danger signal? Did they fear my tent or see me? I peeped over the ridge and there, not ten feet away, was a flock of thirteen *Hooded Merganser*, the tiny wavelets rising and falling at their breasts. Eleven almost full-grown young and the parents. They stuck their heads in the water, they darted, they rose on their feet and spread their wings—all unconscious of me so near. They were hidden a moment by the ledge; the next, I saw that all the youngsters had landed on the point of it—to flap and preen and rub, until from a distance came the two quacks of the elders. Every movement ceased and every eye was wide and alert;

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then they biddably took to the water and swam off. Would you call it a visit? I did. . . .

Once or twice that afternoon I walked up to the high point of the island where the wind would take me full in the face; and then I would push down the long bare slope to the rough-lake's edge. I was in a different world. But the strongest impression of difference came with my return. On the ridge I would always turn for a look over the waste of waters; then down the camp side of the island I would go, with the tail of the wind following me in gradually decreasing force until more than half way, where I seemed to be in good shelter. So I was. But with the turn behind the tree clump a great stillness would lay hold of me—not a stir, and only a far-off sound.

The last time I took this little walk—I think I did it just for the pleasure of that change—was in the late evening. It was not quite the same out there in the face of quick-coming night. In the full daylight there was much to take the attention in detail: color of rock and sky and water; contour of waves; the forms of rock; the laughing wonder of the sparse vegetation, and over the water, far islands. But in the deep

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dusk this variety vanished. The vast lake, the dim sky, and the darkening land—of a sudden their very immensity was overpowering. Infinitely little I seemed—all the ships, and their Camerons, too. For a while I let the vastness possess me; then I walked very quietly back. At the ridge I turned: the clouded sky seemed nearer, the lake little more than a great sound. Then down my side of the island I went, to the bed of the night before in the quiet lee—yea, and by God's grace to a sweeter sleep.

Very early next morning I was off. It was raining, but there was no wind; the hand had fallen, the way was clear. I packed by the light of a candle; and as I paddled out of the little channel, still in the night side of dusk, the sound of quiet rain on the level water was all around me; I could see little jets spring and fall with every drop. . . .

I made eight miles before breakfast and caught the dawn on the way.



## CHAPTER XIII

### JUST TEA

**T**EA is just tea—the almost incomparable. More and more I am coming to think it *the* drink of the open, however. I cannot tell exactly why; and I know that other drinks have their excellences—coffee, for instance, and cocoa. For myself, I come back to tea, the ever-satisfying; and I am told that men finding themselves for a prolonged period in the woods—even confirmed coffee drinkers—sooner or later take to tea. Clear tea, by the same token, if the stay is long enough.

I talked tea with a lumber-jack once when he was portaging my canoe twelve miles on account of a log jam. He told me that they had the choice of coffee or tea in their camp now, and that many men drank coffee. That may well be. Lumber camps have in recent years changed much in regard to diet: they are almost up-to-date boarding houses; the diet is more the result of a desire on the companies' part to have within



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limit everything men may fancy than an indication which of these two drinks a man himself would in the forest finally come to prefer. Woods rangers are better authorities, I think. I once spent the night with two in their shack in northern Ontario. They were on their second year of service, and they told me that they drank only coffee when they came up first, but gradually they had taken to tea, and now drank nothing but that—clear. Trappers, hunters, and prospectors would, I believe, tell the same story.

It would be interesting to know why. For one thing tea is convenient for carrying. It is light—much lighter than coffee; and pound for pound goes farther. A cup three times daily for one hundred days can be made from a single pound of tea. It is less liable to injury; for while both suffer from a wetting, tea will not under rough conditions deteriorate with age as coffee does. The latter needs an air tight container to keep it at its best, but does tea? I'm not quite sure. This I know: I can throw mine into a small canvas bag and along with other stuff lug it without apparent injury for an indefinite period. The fact that many brands are

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now done up in packages with tinfoil linings, though it seems to make against my contention, enables one, if there is such a deterioration through exposure, to prevent it in the open with tea easier than with coffee.

But neither convenience or lastingness is the only reason for tea's acceptability as a drink for a long stay in the open. Nor is the ease with which it is prepared, although I think that here, too, it has the advantage over coffee. The fact is that with the primitive methods of woods'-cooking, it is hard with either to get the best results; and since tea is the more delicate, I think it suffers more from these crude methods. But to obtain in the woods a good drink from either, nothing could be much simpler: one drops coffee into boiling water and lets it boil for the well-known three minutes; or one steeps tea in water that has just boiled, for about the same time—and behold, the drink!

So far as tea is concerned, while this is quite the best way for the first cup, the second is likely to be spoiled by long steeping. When I so wish, I overcome this difficulty in a simple manner. I make the infusion in a cup, and at the proper time, through a perforated pancake-turner,

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strain off again into the fire pail. But such a method does not give the best result, because tea must be brewed in a vessel large enough to allow a more instant infusion of every leaf. For a single cup it is better, then, to make the brew in the fire pail.

Though I learned much about canoeing, and life in the outdoors, from my experience with four Indians in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, I did not learn how to make good tea. It was some time before I quite understood their method. They carried no other drink; and they always made enough for one "dish" apiece for the six of us; but instead of boiling that much water, they allowed for about two or three cupfuls to be put in cold after the infusion was made. This gave the proper amount finally, but I saw later that at the same time it settled the leaves, cooled the drink, and economized fuel. It may have been a marvel of efficiency, but that cold douche did not make good tea.

By the way, an incident worth relating occurred one day at the second meal (we ate four meals daily). After the tea had just been "dished," one of the Indians spilled his over his legs. It was the signal for a burst of uncontrol-

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lable laughter on the part of the three others. Some of them stretched at full length and laughed. And when I thought the risibility of the incident had spent itself, one of them broke out a second time, and the whole thing was gone over again as heartily as before. The Stoic Indian!—and tea.

But why these Indians drank only tea, why my two rangers finally turned from coffee to it, why a couple of years ago I found only tea in the van of a log drive I ran into, why Stefansson carried only tea (he says they drank even this but once a week) into the Arctic—these questions are not to be answered altogether, it seems to me, by tea's greater portability, lastingness, and ease of making. In all this I am speaking, of course, rather personally. For example, I do not *know* that it has been established beyond controversy that tea is the accepted drink for prolonged periods in the woods. I have found it so in a few cases; and I myself am pretty sure that if I could take only the one or the other of these two drinks into the woods, I should choose tea. All things considered, I prefer it. Nor is it altogether a matter of agreeableness. I like coffee. Its odor and its taste are ravishingly

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pleasant. But I never found myself after coffee tackling the hard work of a cruise with the same vim and vigor as after tea. Long before I knew that it was the effect of tea, I have been fairly startled at a transformation in myself. Time and again, I have come to the noon spell, limp and lagging from a hard morning; and after a lunch with tea have taken again to the paddling, in such a manner as to discover with a kind of shock that I was keyed to a high pitch of vigor. No doubt of it, tea is for me more stimulating, more refreshing, than coffee. But that's only a single instance, utterly impossible to generalize from—and there you are.

One can speak much more conclusively about the difference between tea and the stronger stimulants. These hit the body rudely—limbs and brain. Not so, tea. Refreshment is experienced, but the exact moment of it can't be pointed to. One goes on one's way renewed; and that's all there is to say. Only one *can* go on one's way. The ruder stimulants call for a halt; business cannot be as well done while their effects last; conviviality and fun spurt out; the higher dignified centers are in abeyance for a time. Tea calls for no halt. There is no waste



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or vulgarity about it; and that may be why woman, the provident, economical, and dignified, in all things, indulges in it so much. I have read that statistics show its consumption is increasing rapidly even in these coffee-drinking United States. That must refer to both men and women in the crowded places, and interests me a great deal. But far more, as a camper, I like to think that in the out-of-the-way places it has always been a cherished drink; that even at this moment, here and there, far apart, on this flying, whirling planet, tiny men by tinier fires—lonely trappers in white and silent woods; prospectors in untrod gulches, with hope deferred; fishermen on heaving seas—brew themselves this simple beverage and lo! are renewed and encouraged.

I have said that it is easily made in the woods; and I have always had an odd notion that the wood fire and the open air add to it in some way. A mere fancy, perhaps. But whether in the woods or out of it, to get tea at its best requires certain conditions. It has its rights and dignities not to be violated with impunity. Demanding, for instance, a certain preeminence in importance, it is not at its best as a mere after-dinner accessory. Oscar Wilde, that outstanding figure

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of the esthetic and decadent periods of the eighties and nineties in England could find nothing more contemptuous to say of the middle class than that they ate meat with their tea. Now surely one will not miss heaven for that; but take it as you may, I think that tea is only at its best as the main article of a light meal. It must be largely sufficient for the time being unto itself, occupy the throne—be the delicate *pièce de résistance* of the sitting.

I have come to this conclusion from my own experience; for such a light meal in the middle of the day, I have long found to be the best plan on the cruise. No cooking; only fire enough to boil water. But there must be tea; it reigns as it were over the comparatively little feast. It is wonderfully good at any kind of meal, but put thus in its proper place, given its due respect, it is altogether quite incomparably excellent. Care is bestowed chiefly on it. The water is spotlessly clean, the container immaculate, and everything and everybody ready. From the moment the water begins to sing, there must be no delay; everything must go step by step—deliberately, of course, but nevertheless with a certain precipitancy, as of those anxious to catch the proper

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moment of pleasure. The water boils, the brew is made, the miracle of drink is taken. Long-boiled water or water unfresh spoils it. To leave it long undrunk after it has been made is, in a subtle way, also marring, and over-brewing is fatal, but just what time should be given to brew differs I think with tastes and blends.

Much could be said, too, of the delicate and beautiful color of tea—a delight to the eye of the drinker. But I speak of color especially for another reason. By doing so I may still lay myself open to ridicule, though the phenomenon wherein the impressions of one sense are experienced also in terms of another—tones heard, for instance, when one smells a delicate perfume—has of late been noted by psychologists. It is of such an apparent transference from the taste of tea that I have to tell. Only once was I conscious of it. I was using a very fine blend—a gift. I was in excellent health, quite hungry, and had swallowed a mouthful or two of food before tea. Then with the first taste of that, I was suddenly aware of all the colors of the spectrum. I *saw* them—or was it fancy? I do not attempt to explain it. Did some odd slant of light through mist really set at that particular

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moment these colors on the retina? Or by a subtle and incomprehensible process was the light of Oriental suns that day in the North Woods released and made prismatic for the inward eye? I do not know. But it pleases me very much to think that in some way I may have thus actually caught what might be called the first fine careless rapture of that rare blend,—that, in a manner of speaking, for once I was able to sip the rainbow in a paradise of tea.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PERFECT DAY\*

#### I. MORNING.

**H**OW I came to use the canoe for a bed it is not necessary for me to say. But I do; and I like it, especially since my present one was made with that object in view. And it just happens that, of my vacation, the first night spent in the canoe on the water brought the morning of this particular day.

I awoke to a fringe of light in the east, and a late star or two. Under the big sky, I seemed

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\*My companion on the day here described was Frederick Norman Grandy, then a teacher in the Collegiate Institute at Orillia. In the year 1915, we met at the University of Toronto, where he was attending the summer session; and when the term ended, we spent two weeks canoeing in the Georgian Bay district. Almost immediately afterwards, he entered military service. He was appointed to the 157th, Simcoe Foresters, Battalion, and went overseas with it as Captain and Adjutant in October, 1916. Early in 1918, he reverted to the rank of Lieutenant, and joined the 20th Battalion in France. On August 28, he was killed in the advance from before Arras.

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little and alone. Think of me what you will, it was so quiet, I was half-afraid. Drops of dew hung from the paddle handle, and covered the gunwales and blankets. A white mist lay low over the lake; it was dead calm, yet the air was a moving coolness on my face and set the mist into a million wispy trailings straight upwards. It was good even to breathe, to smell the freshness, and let the cool air touch my face. Then I discovered a strange thing: in that silent world, my canoe was moving very slowly at its anchor, through a quarter of the horizon, so as to give me a kind of panoramic view. This began where a distant bluff rock and high pine tree laid their dim outlines against the sky, went right through an unobstructed space filled above the mist with the pale light of morning, and on out to a black splotch of woods. There the boat lay dead still a moment or two, and then went slowly back until I saw again the rock and the pine.

I could not account for it. Some imperceptible current, perhaps, in that part of the lake where I was anchored; maybe the just moving air caused it; I do not know. Only this: it was a wondrously beautiful moving picture of the

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dawn solitude to be awakened to, and filled me with solemn glee. And as I lay there long in open-eyed silence, at each slow swing, the woods and the pine island took clearer shape, and the mists went trailing up into the gradually increasing glow of the dawn.

### II. A MID-MORNING SURPRISE.

Have you had moments of deep and unexpected pleasure? Of course you have. They come at rare intervals, from little things, to people childlike and unaffected—and most of us are that, praise be! That's why I tell what came to me on this mid-morning; you will understand and recall your own.

By ten o'clock we—Granny and I; you'll hear of him later—were miles on our cruise. The region was of wondrous beauty. Islands were all about us, foliaged to the water's edge. The sky had clouded; there was not a stir of wind. Rain fell gently, and gradually changed our world into one of even greater beauty. The walls of green darkened; here and there slender birches lay against them, glistening in the wet, like upright chalk tracings on a giant black-board; and all about us on the water, the drops



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sent up tiny silver shafts, shorter or longer as the rain moderated or increased its gentle fall.

At a point we hugged, a man stood uncovered to the warm rain; and we "stopped by" a moment to give and take in talk. It lasted longer than we expected, and took for me a surprising and pleasant turn. There had been much rain recently, and on that we broke into communication. I ventured that we needed a strong north wind to *sweep up the world* a bit. And at that I noticed this lawyer from Buffalo, whose attention had been centered chiefly on Granny, eyeing me close.

"May I ask your name?" he said. I told him, not without a slight query in my mind. But that was nothing to the surprise from his next.

"Do you happen to have published a description of this whole Georgian Bay region?"

"Yes."

"One called *The Place of the Leaning Pine*?"

"I'm guilty," I admitted.

And then he said very simply and very sincerely: "It gave and still is giving me and my family a great deal of pleasure. And I know a dozen other families. . . ." Never mind the rest.

## THE PERFECT DAY

It was no mere politeness; for this is how he discovered me; and the man who could do it had been no casual reader. Any one who has been through the islands of the Georgian Bay knows the Giant's Tomb, at the lower end. All the guide books speak of it, and in my description (I had to look it up afterwards) I had said that "in certain atmospheres it is dim and far off. Then a rain and wind will wash and sweep the world, and the Tomb will have leaped nearer over night." And now six years after it has been written, comes a man who discovers the writer from that trick of speech.

I frankly confess that the thing pleased me mightily, more than I could have believed. That I should have heard this at play on the very playground described seemed in itself particularly fitting. And then it was so unexpected as to seem like a romantic adventure. For I had had such fun in the very writing as to accept with equanimity the thought, like hundreds of other writers about theirs, that my little article had gone out on the sea of magazine literature quite unnoticed and been lost; and behold! here it was after six years still carrying to a few its little load of pleasure. And I am telling this

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not alone for the cheering effect it had that play-day on myself, but for the thousands of other minor writers who all unknown have given pleasure, but who may never have met as I did some one who would let them know.

### III. NOON.

Lunch is a short meal on the cruise—short and simple. A mug or two of tea, bread and jam, and mayhap, if the portages are frequent, a tin of beans. No cooking. A lazy half hour with tobacco when it is over; then the paddle again.

It is of the tobacco period on that day that I speak. But first, see Granny. Not old. The nickname is not a thousand miles from his real one; but in giant contrast to it, youth as of the gods was upon him, and in appearance he might have sat to a sculptor. Eyes a laughing blue; and a sunny half-malicious smile lay in the corners of the mouth, even in repose. Together they were irresistible. But there wasn't a touch of vanity in him. And he had one beloved peculiarity. He could not stand still, but would swing his boyish body slightly to and fro side-wise, and quite unconsciously. To see him swinging thus, and waiting for the pot to boil,

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put you in mind of a hungry, impatient boy waiting for his "piece."

Well, I was stretched in the shade of a cedar during the smoke-time, half dozing, when I heard Granny's voice.

"I'm going, Skipper." And there he was standing near me with a lurking smile, and his odd swing.

"Where now, Granny?" I answered, half laughing.

"To the war."

That sobered me; I could say nothing. It was nearing the end of the first year of the war; then, in Canada, no two men could be together five minutes without discussing it; and in the early days of our trip we had talked of nothing else. But gradually the absence of newspapers, and new surroundings had driven it pretty much out of our conversation.

I do not remember all Granny said that noon, but it comes in on me now that it is given to few to be present at another's decision to make the supreme sacrifice. For that was my fortune. A cruise is a time for frankness, which usually displays itself at evening round the fire; a drawing time, that, when from unexpected sources things

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new and old—great things—come. But confidence is engendered at any time on a congenial trip; and of my many, I do not remember one that was so congenial as this; and in a way, I got, with a feeling of awe, the full force of that wave of emotion on which Granny's great decision rode.

Snatches of what he said will never leave me. "Pretty much a coward;" he admitted, "but I'm going." And then after a time, as a kind of excuse for himself, and with a new note of hardness in the words: "Some things have been done that would make a rabbit spit in a bulldog's face; yes, Skipper, make even an oyster fight; and I'm going."

He spoke about his people when I asked. He was glad to say it all rested with him, that neither father nor mother would put a thing in the way. "I believe they will be rather glad." Then a little later he said something that will come with a kind of surprise to you as it did to me. I pick it out from its context and give it in a lump. It seems bald and artificial; but it wasn't. "What I want to say is that this region is in a way responsible for my decision. I can't explain it quite; but it's all so beautiful. And this morning it came in on me somehow that there is one



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thing that matches it in beauty. Do you know what it is? 'Killed in action.' "

There he stood, swinging slightly, the smile quite visible, and all about us the quiet water, the foliage-touched rocks, and the lonely sky. In the midst of them he had made his decision; in the glory of youth, he had marched up to the great inevitable end; and to him it and our surroundings were both beautiful.

I am giving you Granny as he was to me that day, and for my part I rejoice to take him even so. I do not say that I understood him quite, but I've been thinking since much about what he said, and I believe now that he is right. For beautiful surroundings do call for noble conduct. And then last summer I was in the hall of the college that is mother to us both. The long list of her dead in this war is there, and above it the words we had both read in the old days, but which had not come to me for years: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. "Sweet and 'beautiful' it is for one's country to die."

### IV. A PORTAGE PERSON AND A WETTING.

Where a lake dropped into a river, we came upon a man fishing at the fall; and knowing that the first rapid on the river was quite possible to



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run in low water and impossible in high—for I had run it before,—I asked, with the faith of one on the water trail, for information.

“How about the Chute? Can we run it?”

He was not very cordial or very communicative, but he had come up the river that morning and his answer was, “Yes, you can get down all right.”

I thanked him and left him, glad that our portages were to be reduced by one. A little thrill of pleasure went through me, too, at the thought of white water again.

We made the carry and were swinging at a good clip round the bend of the river for the Chute, when this man with a companion in an empty canoe, overtook us and passed us by. They spoke not a word, but headed straight for the center of the fall. We were directly behind. Almost at the top of the rapid, suddenly they turned their canoe completely round, and reached the shore, bow upstream.

“Are they going down backwards?” exclaimed Granny, at the beginning of their movement. It was his first run.

“No,” I said, “but we’ve got to take it head first now.” It was too late for us to turn.

## THE PERFECT DAY

Our canoe weighed exactly fifty pounds. Counting our two selves, it carried a load of four hundred—oh, but I was the greenhorn that day!

A half minute afterwards. . . . What happened in that half minute?

The rapid was a simple thing, perfectly straight—a long smooth black slide of water, then waves, or pitches, eight of them, into the bubbly pool below. Simple but very strong. All the water that even when the river is low makes thousands of horse power and to spare for lighting a half dozen towns twenty miles away, here goes tumbling through narrows fifty feet wide. But now the river was high; and it was at the top of the slide I saw the size of the waves, and knew that it was all up to us.

In the time that it takes to write half a line, things to fill a page or two jumped into my mind. I had a thrill of pleasure on that long smooth glide; I remembered previous thrills and knew the contrast; I thought of my own foolishness in taking the rapid unexamined, and of my responsibility for the tenderfoot companion; I calculated the chances for a quick sheer to avoid the waves, had a skilled hand been in the bow,

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and felt the hopeless decision that we must plunge in. All this in a brief second on the smooth!

Then we struck the first wave—not to mount it as I had always done before, but to plunge in. I saw the green water filled with bubbles flow over the side. It began near the forward deck, came right down the gunwale of the canoe—beautifully clear and green, four inches of it—and filled our canoe half full. I felt rather than saw the boat slacken its speed—as though some invisible brake had been put on; and then I remembered with great distinctness all my fear for ourselves and our duffle changing to or being mixed with a feeling of pity for the canoe itself. Suddenly for me it wasn't a dead thing, but living, companionable—and in trouble. "It's not fair! It's not fair!" kept dinning in my brain.

Off a woods logging-road through a swamp in winter, an untrained horse flounders—flounders hopelessly. I knew that my canoe was in a way like it—floundering hopelessly, to the thought in my mind: "Too bad; not fair; poor thing." For there it was, doing its best to mount the next wave, but scarcely rising at all. If four inches

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came in at the first, twice that came in now; and on the third, the ill-treated thing, except as a log might, did not rise at all. And it was on the third, too, that it came in upon me that the water was delightfully warm, and that we were in the worst possible condition for an upset.

Not a thing was tied in, except myself; for I remembered that as we loaded hurriedly at the last portage, I had to jam in, between a bundle and a thwart. There would be no extricating myself, whether we turned or sank. But behold! we did not sink. The fact is, that, lucky for us, the water was boiling so powerfully, we couldn't. Logged and all as we were, we kept up, and straight, in spite of the boiling masses driving us every way, and reached the rock without losing a thing. But here we had some trouble with things on the top. When I was getting out I saw the camera case go over the side. I jumped in and got it as it boiled away; and when Granny was pulling out the canoe, his slicker went over, for which he too had to swim.

Lucky we were, you say? True. But what a mess to come back to! Camera wet; the grub bag, too;—everything. Tobacco sopping—and if ever one needed a smoke, it was then. Yes, a mess it was.

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Add this. A motor launch with three or four men in it grinning at our discomfiture was anchored in a cove just below the waves of the rapid; the two men, who were easing their canoe down the edge with a rope, got into the launch and chugged past us with the laughing and original remark: "Water's pretty wet, isn't it?"

Are you asking the question, "Did that man deliberately lure you into the rapid?" It looked a little like it, but I simply can't make myself believe he did. It's too inconceivably dishonorable to believe, too criminal, in fact. When I think of what might have happened had we been less skilful—no, we were not lured in.

But how explain it? This way. It is all a question of two men speaking of the same thing from different points of view. I asked the question from the standpoint of running the rapid as I did; he answered the question from the standpoint of easing down by rope without unloading. He meant that we could, by hook or by crook, get our boat down without taking it out, even as he had afterwards taken down his own. The fact is, I'm to blame; I should not have taken it without examination. But I will say



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this: Had this man come later to trouble as we did, I think I should have shut off my motor and offered him a pipe of dry tobacco. Mr. Portage Man, good day and good-bye; I have along the way of the woods met others just a little more human.

### V. THE END OF A PERFECT IMPERFECT DAY.

A mile or so farther down we landed with our soaked outfit to dry out. Years before, I knew the region well; at that time one might expect to see people once a week from that shore, and then only a river driver or a canoeist. I expected the same now. 'Tis true I had seen a motor boat; but I thought it belonged to the village at the mouth, and that we should see no more. I was wrong. A canal at the river mouth gave boats easy access; we were to see many.

It could not have been a better day for the drying—nor a better spot. The sun beat down fiercely; the rock was hot, with broad spaces perfectly clean to spread out our stuff on—every last thing. So out it came. All the different articles of food; every tiny little thing in the personal kits—I leave the finished sight to your imagination, and go on. But I think we were



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both at bottom so glad of our getting off thus well, and of the good drying sun, that we could not find it in our hearts to complain.

We were scarcely spread out, when we heard a motor. It passed up, on the other side, toward the Chute. Then another. Heavens! Where were we?

But the chief stir came from another quarter—out of a cove farther down on our own side. Motor boats, quiet or noisy; row boats; canoes,—it looked as though a village must be down there. Mostly they, too, headed for the Chute, but their way was much nearer our side; and somehow the sight of our tent seemed to draw them even closer. In that still air their talk reached us. "Tent over there," would come from one; and there would be a turning of all heads, and a discussion that ended with "Indians, I guess," and a swerving away of the boat. And to be taken for Indians went ill with Granny.

A row boat with a boy and girl in it later was headed so close in that we had to take to cover; one does not carry a trunk full of clothes into the woods, and a wetting makes a scanty costume in the drying process. Happily they, too, shied off with the audible conclusion:

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"Indians, I guess;" and I behind a bush heard an explosive protest from Granny in the tent. Really the thing began to be serious. Suppose some of these people should conclude we were civilized, and take it into their sociable heads—with the freedom of the open—to give us a call!

I had scarcely thought it when a canoe came creeping right up the shore. We saw it first and shot to cover. Hundreds of times on the playing fields of our country, I had seen, before crowded grand stands, men far more scantily clad than Granny in his generous towel and I in my still more generous sweater. No one thought anything of it. But somehow it did not seem right even in the unconventional woods to hold, thus clad, an afternoon reception; and on this retreat, Granny got the friendly bush and I the tent. It really began to look as though the fun were just beginning.

On came the canoe, paddled leisurely, close in, by a middle-aged man and woman no less, each bantering the other good humoredly enough. They talked low, but we heard every word.

"Indians nothing!" my lady said. "Ever see an Indian have a blanket like that?"

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

"You're right, Ann; look at those B.V.D.'s." And I could imagine from the tone a twinkle in his eye.

"H'm! I thought perhaps that 'clothes line' would bring you light," was her return fling at him. He made no reply, but yo-hoed companionably to our tent.

"Whoo-hoo;" came from the lady. "We've come to make a beach call."

I had my head out under the back of the tent, and I heard Granny groan. The comedy of the whole thing came over me.

"Chirp up, Granny;" I said, "ask them to tea."

"Go to blazes; what'll I say?"

I told him to remember Nausicaa and Ulysses; and how Zeus gave him winged words.

"You're dressed as well as he was, Granny," I consoled him.

But at that moment there came up from the shore words that touched his pride and gave him utterance:

"They're quiet enough for Indians, anyhow."

"No, we're not Indians;" he called out. "We're white enough, but—we—we don't want to see anybody, we got wet."

"Did you get into the water?" the man asked.

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"Yes—no—the water got into us—in the rapid up there."

"Well," the man said slowly and deliberately, "if you ran the Chute in this high water, you're—"

"I know," I called out, "I'm just that. But we got through pretty well; only we had to swim after a thing or two, and the water's wet—I've been told."

And then we heard from the shore, in an undertone:

"Paddle off a little, Ann; I'm going to see if they need anything." And that large-souled son of Cleveland, defying conventions, came up the rocky way.

At sight of our litter of stuff out to dry, his eyes must have opened.

"Well, you are in it, for sure."

But he had a discriminating eye; it singled out our tobacco spread in the sun.

"Nothing to smoke, eh? I got plenty, though."

I praised his insight.

"Ho-ho-ho!" I heard him laugh when he got sight of Granny, round the edge of the bush. "I guess you'd like this to be a closed sea for a while."

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Granny told him that a rigid blockade of his populous village around the corner would not be altogether undesirable.

We told him how it happened, the grateful smoke going lazily into the air meanwhile. He offered clothes.

"Lots of 'em down in our camp; I'll bring 'em up."

It was only when we pointed out that, thanks to the excellence of the day for drying, we should shortly in our own be clothed—and in our right mind—that he gave it up.

Then the canoe called him.

"Ann," we heard him banter at the shore, "I must really bear you away; this rock is not exactly for a daughter of Eve."

"H'm; I guess I know that. Did you inquire about their food?"

"Yes. They've lots of tobacco now; you should see their oatmeal and cornmeal spread out on a rock to dry."

It was a fact. We did spread that wet stuff, and in an hour and a half it was dry as dust and as good as ever. But the kindly woman did not know that.

"Tobacco!" she answered scornfully. "I bet



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you never asked them if they were hungry. . . .” And distance took them beyond our ears.

“Yon’s a fine couple, Granny,” I said, after we had grinned at each other.

When he came back from feeling his trousers: “Skipper, this is the best day we’ve had yet. Yes;” (I think he was answering my remark) “worth all this bother even to have heard those two. Dad would call that woman a ‘mother in Israel;’ he means something big by it, too. I’d like to see her” . . .

We did. Just after supper we heard a friendly hail from far-off.

“Ship ahoy! Can’t keep the blockade any longer!”

“Open sea,” we shouted back; and on they came, to spend a half hour in the twilight as it can only be done at one of those unexpected meetings by people whose days have been spent at play in the open. There was good talk, and laughter, and songs. One of the last, sung by a sweet voice, had an air that haunted you to tears; something about the end of a perfect day. Don’t laugh at me. I learned afterwards that it had gone over our country like a wave, and was on everybody’s



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and every Victrola's tongue. I did not wonder. It kept running in my mind when I was lying under the sky, dog tired and happy in my snug canoe, with Granny sleeping audibly up near the tent. I was going over the events of the day and a snatch of that song kept making a sort of refrain to my thoughts.

"It isn't true," I said at last. "There is no perfect day, except an imperfect one; and it's just because there isn't, that the song is so attractive. This day of Granny's and mine, now ended, is the typical one. Misunderstanding and blunder, and brave effort and partial success; comedy and tragedy (over there in the East the greatest in history, stretching its long arm to touch even my sleeping companion); and people stiff or sociable, kindly or cruel." And I thanked God that I was glad in just such a world, with its dawns and its unchanging stars, to foot it bravely and loyally on to the end.

## CHAPTER XV

### PORTAGE PEOPLE

WE carried the canoe from the station to the water's edge, bluish-green water, a mere finger-slip of it, between rocky, forest-crowned shores.

A group of men gathered, idle, curious, human. It was, I now think, the canoe that attracted them, even in that country of canoes. They were quiet and reserved at first; but when my companion, at my suggestion, went off to scurry for a piece of rope, they broke easily into talk.

"Where's that feller goin' with that canoe?"

For fun I fell in with their illusion and kept to the third person singular.

"He's going to the lower end of the Georgian Bay."

The distance surprised them.

"That's a long way," said one.

"That's a trip, for sure," said another.

A third whistled a long low "W-h-e-e-e-w!"

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By this time I had the canoe afloat; a gay and a beautiful thing, its varnished-cedar ribs, from stem to stern, lay delicately reflected on the colored water. For a moment or two we were all quiet and admiring. Then the practical, never far off, seized them.

"What do you suppose he had to pay for a canoe like that?"

The question touched me ironically. Several times since ordering the craft I had been pricked as to extravagance. On the top of that, not ten minutes before, I had paid, under vigorous protest, what were legal but exorbitant express charges from the latitude of Lake Ontario, and the smart was still in my spirit.

But with that question I knew also for certain what before I had only surmised: that in their minds my companion was the plutocrat of the party, and I his guide; and though I should have a case of conscience about it afterwards, I liked their idea so well that I could not bear to be rid of it. I answered truly, but gave a wrong impression.

"I happen to have been out with him often, and I know well that it cost a pretty penny—express charges and all," I added out of my sore feelings.

## PORTAGE PEOPLE

They helped me load; then, my companion being long about the rope, we swapped tobacco and had a pipe.

They were all guides, mostly of middle age, and dependent much on the tourist. They wore shoepacks, like myself; like myself they grew the typical Canadian moustache. They had all been out several times for short periods that year; their faces were bronzed and cool. But on the whole, the summer had not been favorable; and now that the war was on they knew that the season, even when it should have been at its height, was indeed at its end.

"You're lucky with this three weeks' job," they told me.

Then my companion came, old Panama hat, knee-high, yellow boots, and all—fit representative of an English syndicate, battered but still financially strong. Had they known, they might have been as free with him as with me; but explain it as you may, at his coming, these men became quite still.

Of their attitude toward myself, though, I was simple enough to be quite proud. It had been my fortune to be reared in the atmosphere of peasantry. And although afterwards I had

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rubbed shoulders with another world, it pleased me to think that I had kept the earmarks of my up-bringing, and that now on the threshold of my holiday peasantry should point out my true place and take me again to itself. I felt as if, through these men, that great northland of forest and water had opened its front door and led me in with a kindly hospitality. A few yards from the shore I looked back from the stern and they waved me a farewell.

\*       \*       \*       \*

In the very heart of the wilderness I was roping the thwarts of my canoe for portaging, when I heard a light step behind me. An Indian took a birch-bark canoe from his shoulders, laid it at the water's edge as tenderly as if it were a baby, and with a grunt of recognition at me got back over the portage.

Then steps I heard that shook the earth. A huge form of man came down the path, bare-headed, red of face, and breathing hard. He seemed to fill the road.

He was loaded down. Over his shoulder the upper parts of three bags were held by one hand, the lower parts hanging loosely and awkwardly about his body. Only one part hung where it



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did not interfere. Another had swung round from the left shoulder so as to be seen under his right arm low down; the third was on the point of slipping from the shoulder altogether, but was prevented by a bundle he carried on his left hand.

It was not a heavy load. Neatly compacted and carried properly, a boy could have taken it. It was a sore business now, though, and must have felt like a ton weight. A picture of distress, the big man tramped fast to make the landing before his load spilled by the wayside.

He made it—a wet hole by a low and crude dock that looked like a raised corduroy road. He slung the bundle from his left hand and half turned to drop the others in the dry. But at that moment one foot slipped; man and load both came down completely on the dock.

It was a ludicrous fall. The old place, much in decay, slanted deep away from his side. There he lay, his head low, his feet in the air, a kind of big keg with slanted, short legs for spigots. I saw the whole thing with half an eye as I went on with my roping; and, though there was that in me which could have howled in laughter, I was seized with what I thought



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was a wise blindness and dumbness, and held myself in.

With the familiarity of the woods I went over after a minute to say how-d'ye-do. He had partly recovered his equanimity; but his hair still flew signals of distress, and there was a trace of soreness in his big bare face.

"Hello," I said, cordially.

"Hello" (not cordial); "didn't you see me fall?"

"Yes."

"Well, why in hell didn't you laugh?"

And at that everything I had with difficulty been smothering for the last minute burst out loud and long. I had only time to say I was waiting for him to join me.

The soreness left his expression, his eyes closed, his body shook, and the old dock teetered under him.

"But Lord! isn't this a country?" he said when he got utterance. "Look there," pointing to a bag, "they're fish, pickerel and bass—a dozen or more."

He caught my eye and read my thought.

"No, I didn't squelch them, by heck! But I came near it."

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I saw the fall in memory, and roared again; again the old dock shook. Out from a cloud the sun blazed, hot and near, for it was past mid-morning.

"I must have lost my hat," he said, looking about. "My Indian will get it."

The guide came, the hat, too; the big man and I exchanged names, and I said good-bye.

"Don't forget," he called out after me. "Jordan, of Philadelphia. Coal; only Coal Jordan there."

Under my canoe on the way over I was glad that I had held in at first; and even to this day I have not forgotten him nor, as was evidenced on the portage, the good stuff of which he was made.

\* \* \* \*

We were making a carry on the French River when an Indian with his family came pointing their bark canoe to the portage. They had landed when I returned for the last of our stuff; the man was off examining the rapid for a chance to run; the woman and two children were squatting on the rocks near the canoe.

Now it so happened that we were overstocked with a brand of cereal sometimes associated with

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the shorter catechism. "Here," thought I, "is an opportunity to lighten our load."

"Would you like some oatmeal?" I asked.

"Yes," (a little indifferently, I thought).

I handed it to her, and was about to shoulder my bag and be off when I heard:

"Where you come by that?"

She was pointing, not at the meal, but straight at my throat.

"Glory be!" thought I, "she means my bandana."

"This?" I inquired, putting my fingers on it.

"Yes. Me like um. Give?"

I had been much in the open night and day recently, and the question set me to a wild extravagance of refusal.

"No, siree—ma'am, I mean. Why, I couldn't think of it! It bears the colors of my clan. In these colors people of mine made love long since—they really did; stole cattle in them, perhaps; went in them, maybe, to the gibbet itself! Must they come at last to a squaw?"

She did not read my mind.

"Give?" she kept on saying.

Then it came in on me that I was on an Indian reservation—a corral for a once vast roaming.

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Did that put me under any obligation? Not in the least. I thought also of the Indians who had led Champlain and all the holy fathers along this river three hundred years before. But I remembered, too, how cruelly by them many of those intrepid missionaries had been treated. Logically, I was well buttressed to say no to the request.

But there was the old river with its enduring rocks; there, too, child of a vanishing race, was the stout woman with the outstretched hand and the appealing voice.

"Me like um. Give?"

"Madam," I said, untying the knot, "I can't see a single reason for giving it to you, but here it is."

Her eyes had brightened when I took the handkerchief from my neck, but when her hands felt it she made a sound of joy. . . .

## CHAPTER XVI

### A BLAZE ON A PORTAGE

WHEN we came to the portage on that narrow, woods-choked river, it was falling dark—too late for the carry one mile and a quarter long. Things were not going very well. Here we were, forced to spend an oppressively hot night in a low hole, all the while knowing that beyond the portage were the high, breeze-touched points of Crane Lake, on one of which we had hoped to make camp.

We were behind time, too. Although we had given ourselves a liberal schedule—fourteen days to make one hundred and fifty miles in the form of a square, only the second and fourth sides of which had portages,—we had just entered upon the second leg of our course, and, thanks to the wind on the open Georgian Bay, already the days were half gone.

These, however, were in themselves small things, and would have counted for little had not the inevitable reaction from the novelty and

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excitement of the first few days been upon us either altogether unnoticed or little attended to. It probably was deep in the unspoken mind of each of the four that, contrary to his opinion during that earlier period, there was really something to be said in favor of civilization.

Not without reason, either. At noon that day we left the water of the Georgian—all the clean, gray rock of it under unbroken skies, the island-sown reaches of it, all the stately day ends of it,—and carried our canoes past an insignificant chute into the Blackstone River. A greater contrast or a more uninviting prospect it would be hard to fancy. The river, black and shallow, flowed between narrow sloping banks of rock; and for six or eight feet above the shore—the highwater mark of lumbering operations—there was scarcely a living thing. Tree trunks, some of them charred by fire, stood out here and there in this area on either side, always stone dead. Dirty logs lay on it; and beyond this limit, sweeping gradually back, was a great fire burnt territory, new life breaking forth now and then among its tangled slash.

Our spirits were dashed a little. Hard work was beginning, too. Altogether that afternoon,



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there were five lifts over dams; and three times in the first four miles we were forced to pull the canoes over shallow places. The river got but little deeper as we approached the portage; and although we went from the burnt area to a well wooded country, for the most part there was always near the shore a drowned bottom stuck with unattractive, dead trees. As if in keeping with our new surroundings and our sinking spirits, the sun at noon had slipped into a haze that gradually deepened and overspread the sky; and when, dumb and dispirited, we pushed into the silent portage, forced to set up in the low-limbed woods, that haze had become an inverted bowl of black pall just above our heads, and the air under it was hot and hard to breathe.

As I look back now I wonder more and more why all this did not put me on my guard against that critical hour in the life of a cruise, when, depression falling on the party, the nerves assume a hair-trigger condition liable at the touch of any trying experience to go off in the proverbial row in the camp. I remember I did look at White—long and lean and sunken chested; and it flashed in on my mind, how my friends, not because he wasn't good stuff but because he was

## A BLAZE ON A PORTAGE

so raw and delicate, had counselled against the un wisdom of including him in the party. When a moment after I had thus thought, he bruised his finger, this incident had a strangely depressing effect on me and I believe on all of us.

But our situation did not put me a bit on my guard against the critical hour; neither, indeed, did another and more significant warning—a troubled night awake. Sweeter and deeper sleep never came upon men than that of the previous night, when on Moon Island, in a cleft of thick fir wood thirty feet above the water, we closed our eyes on the free spaces of the stars. This led us to trust to the wood here, low and all as it was. Why, when we lay down, we did not at once sleep, I do not know; for though there were mosquitoes, millions of them, we had with our protectors slept through these in the earlier nights on the bay. Here, though, it was close, too—stifling almost, and we could not settle. Not a man slept. In our restlessness, the netting went loose, and the mosquitoes crawled under—from a night of slappings and smothered groans there stood out in the morning's first light four drawn people anxious for but one thing: to get out of that hole to freer breathings in a broader place.

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It would have been well had some one at this juncture pretended cheerfulness; we could have blown off at him. No one did. We were a trifle more polite to each other, that was all. In taking down the tent, Gray threw the ridge pole carelessly. It hit, not the pail, but the wood on which the pail was sitting—the steaming coffee with its heartening odor flowed over the damp grass. The politeness rather increased.

I remember after our dry breakfast going in and out quite coolly, I thought, among the preparations for the carry, changing the size of a bundle here, looping a rope there, until all was ready. We would make it in one trip; I never thought of anything else, even with those green men. I showed Black how to fix his canoe for carrying, padded his shoulder, and helped him to get it up; on Gray I put a heavy bundle, strapped the provision bag on White's back, with a light bundle over that, and left the other canoe and a few traps for myself.

The way led through a tiny clearing and entered the woods over a small hill. By the time I had fastened the traps at my belt and got the canoe up, the others were over the brow. The whole thing was going at one carry. My load

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was very heavy,—there was pain where the bottom of the canoe rested on my head, and the paddle blades rested sore on my ill-padded shoulders. I came up with the others in talk resting near the woods; laid my canoe on a stump so as to be easily elevated again, and with some trivial remark was joining them, when White said he would have to break his load and make two trips.

Take it as you will, that set me off. I ripped out—well, never mind what it made me say. Scarcely were the words forth, when White, angry as myself, was on his feet. Then for a few seconds hot and bitter words passed between White and me; and when in my increasing anger at some taunt, I was making at him, it was only to find the others between us. I got the canoe on my shoulders and went over the portage with a hot heart—a sight for laughter among gods and men. . . .

Fourteen days out, we camped on a spur of sand in a long, hill-lined bay, three miles from our destination. It was White's night to cook, and I could not help noticing him. His face and arms, battered by wind and sun, were bronzed as never before. Bareheaded, he moved

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deftly around a fire that was just large enough to keep the pot boiling and no more—a sight for an Indian. Later we fell to; and still later a question was put. We had made altogether in the one hundred and fifty miles, twenty-six portages, some of them long; we had been drenched with rain; we had lain down with the dark, and risen with the light—once from sleepless beds, three or four times from shivering ones in the cold mist;—should we go for this last night to the hotel an hour away?

“No!”—in chorus; and White’s voice was not the weakest. Be it so; once more to sleep, then, in the clean, wind-filled, star-crowded night.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SCHOOL OF THE WILDERNESS

But strange when it strikes to within is the known,  
Stranger than newness revealed.

**I** WISH here to set down certain things that have come to me in this play life under primitive conditions. It is a risk in many ways, but I take it.

The very intimacy of a camping holiday leads to a surprising discovery. That two men whose friendship in ordinary life has been maintained unbroken for years should here lose the blessed sight of comedy and be in a downright quarrel is really astonishing. It is a dark and bitter way of the soul one gets a glimpse of then; and the end of that way one does not like to contemplate. But I do not know that the variance is more astonishing than the fact that for healthy men it does not ultimately mar the pleasure of a holiday, may indeed in time enhance it. . . .

A wind once caught two of us in a canoe off an exposed point, so that the lives of both depended on doing certain things which I alone knew; but



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for some reason—call it, on his part, ignorance of the danger—I could not get my companion to do them without the threat of a blow with the paddle. It was an unpleasant and unintelligible situation. But there came to me in a way I never knew before, the necessity of authority and obedience. Later I picked up in this play life the assurance that these two qualities belong to the very constitution of things. The wind held me up with authority; yet every tiny movement of it is a practice of obedience. The trees know these two, and—I was going to say—rejoice; but the very land trembles when a people is threatened with anarchy. . . .

It has been my fortune on these trips to have companions who are new to woods life and those who are not; and with both kinds, I have often to laugh at the manner in which a certain vanity in my skill and knowledge crops out. I thought at first I was alone in this; but I'm not; others have confessed the same thing. A mistake cuts like a knife. An error in judgment once cost me a spill in a rapid. I stood easily our wetting; I managed to bear the loss of a fine camera, and of our provisions with all the inconvenience arising therefrom; but the blow to my vanity—

## THE SCHOOL OF THE WILDERNESS

that humiliating thing I can scarcely now recall without a feeling of soreness. It's all extraordinarily childish and laughable, but I know very well that I cannot be rid of it.

And if failure hurts, success fairly intoxicates. I remember, for instance, for a disheartened crew, snatching a comfortable night—everybody, dry, well-fed, and warm—out of the most difficult conditions. It rained; the ground was soaked where we set the tent; it was both raw and cold, and dark. To be frank, the result was a triumph. But why I should let every word and act and thought afterwards “pat myself on the back” is unanswerable. Is it a necessary concomitant of successful play? In ordinary life I find it quite possible to keep within the bounds of modesty; it is only in this play life that I find the other in me, rank and tall—and unrootable.

These play times have revealed in me a quality less laughable; courage has begun to sprout. It is scarcely possible to say with what pure physical shrinking I first contemplated a long trip on my own resources through an unknown territory. The pampering of civilization made me look only with a shudder on a life out on the

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bare earth, taking, what afterwards I saw it was, a glorious pot-luck under the sky. I conjured giants by the way. Rapids, rains, waves, animals and reptiles of the woods—a tremble went through me at the thought; I was, and still am, pretty much a coward, though it is not a little in my favor that I overcame this natural aversion.

But the tiny step upwards in courage that I can consciously look back to came when I hazarded a ducking and perhaps a life against a rapid. It matters little that to an expert in white water this rapid would have been considered a trifle; it matters even less that I may have overestimated the danger of it; what does count is that in the face of a believed danger I took a certain stand. I can remember how prudence, or cowardice, pled that day for my skin, and how a certain recklessness of daring, new to me, rose up and called for recognition. I can say truly that prudence had much its own way; reason seemed altogether on its side. How I came to go against it, I am at a loss to tell. It seemed as if a wave of emotion carried me suddenly out of commonplace prudence to a new plane where I could see the fun of a risk with life at stake.

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That's all—only this, perhaps: I know now that the intensity of pleasure depends on the danger of the performance; and further, I like to think that I have not altogether lost the influence of that hour; that when tempted naturally to be over-cautious, the memory of this rapid touches ordinary life with the wand of adventure, and I face the difficult situation in the hope of something similar to my forest fun.

After all it really is a great change from modern civilized life in our cities to the elemental one of the woods. From the very first day, for instance, things hardly noticed ordinarily, take on a great and growing interest. Light and darkness, heat and cold, the face of the sky, winds, rains, land, and water,—these all become intimate, significant, and extraordinary. They are no longer mere words; they are primary things. *At a single bound a man is as his ancient forbears were and knows their mind.* The sun, your man of primitive life knows, as the highly artificial man is apt to forget, is really a great friend. Intellectually all men know this; but that's an altogether different thing from the deeper, unforgettable assurance bred of dependence.

## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

I awoke once at dawn to find myself in the heart of a cold thick mist; and in a few moments I knew that it had gone to my very marrow. Shivers ran through me. I cracked on every stitch of available clothing; I busied myself with the work of the camp;—no use. Even the breakfast fire failed to warm me. I remember in these circumstances with what pure physical pleasure I felt the first rays of the sun; and as it licked up the mist and sent its heat through my bones, the idea of its astonishing beneficence was full upon me. Hope and courage reigned again; and never since have I quite forgotten the joy of living in a world that has a sun.

Other assurances have come to me from time to time in this play-life, there with my face close to earth and my head bare to the sky. I never knew what a comfortable place the land itself was until I slipped behind a naked rock of it after a two hours mishandling by big seas. "God lets us turn all things into toys by his great gift of distance," someone has said. It is true; away out from it that morning, the land suddenly became as dear to me as a toy of my childhood; and it was only from an experience like this, when one by one, after the shot to cover, waves



## THE SCHOOL OF THE WILDERNESS

changed to level water, wind to calm—after the roar a great stillness,—that I knew—really *knew*—the comfort of the land and the kindliness of the trees.

But the strangest part comes yet. In a new way, from this experience off there almost alone, I found myself linked with my kind, a brother to the folk; for the strong feelings of gladness at my relief called loudly for an objective expression. I wanted to *do* something that would in a fitting way symbolize delivery from my danger by this kindly land.

The same desire came on another occasion; in a down-pour of rain, after I had been searching the soaked woods in vain for flammable firing, I quite unexpectedly hit on a piece so nearly all gum that it lighted from the match, and blazed fiercely in the midst of the rain. Here, too, in these untoward conditions, the grateful warmth of fire, with the odor of breakfast all about, seemed to call for the same objective expression. Again my gratitude needed a symbol. Something should be done, it seemed. Dancing came into my mind. To have performed the simple act of pouring out water on the ground would have been good be-

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cause it would represent a kind of overflowing gratitude in me. I understood why certain Ontario Indians ceremoniously threw remnants of a feast into the fire that cooked it. Indeed, that morning I thought I saw into the hearts of and knew that I could sympathize with all thankful folk in all time, as they made their various sacrifices—lighted their candles or burnt their incense on all the altars of all the world.

It sounds paradoxical to say that one learns to sympathize with one's kind by isolating one's self. There is truth in it, however. Perhaps the truth is that a man understands sympathetically certain beliefs of past ages by looking into himself in certain rare moments when their conditions are his. At any rate, other glimpses—old, I suppose, as man—similar to those above have come to me in my almost isolated experiences in the back woods.

I landed one day from a northern river and stepped inland. The sky was gray; it was mid-afternoon. Almost immediately a vast and sombre hemlock forest swallowed me up. In there, it was almost dark. I could not see, without looking far above, the roof of green. No bird twittered—nothing; it was deeply

## THE SCHOOL OF THE WILDERNESS

silent; and to the limit of my vision below there was naught but a brown surface studded thick with high and mighty hemlock trunks.

Enter these enchanted woods,  
You who dare,

I thought.

It was indeed an enchanted spot. I crossed it in silent wonder to the river after its bend, came out with a kind of relief, stayed a moment, then plunged back again. Once more the woods took possession of me. In some mysterious way it was alive; moreover it seemed very friendly; and once or twice, so strong was this impression upon me, I found myself looking over my shoulder, feeling sure that if I were only quick enough, I should in some sensible way surprise a beautiful and very near secret of the place. Somehow I knew that day, too, that if an ancient people long gone to its grave had not given a spirit to the trees, a more modern one should; and I got back to the canoe, a brother to the Greek or Celt, as if I had been nurtured in his bygone creed. . . .

I lay down one night with the coming of dark to sleep under an unobstructed sky. A singular clarity was in the atmosphere, and with my waking again, that clarity had not gone. I

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looked for familiar stars in changed positions to estimate the time of night, but to my astonishment, in one quarter, beyond a line above midway the zenith and horizon, there were none.

"It is the dawn!" I cried ecstatically.

Wonder seemed to fill a waiting world; and strangely enough that wonder seemed concentrated along the star line of receding night. Beyond it, on the side opposite the empty sky, night wore its accustomed face; the W (Cassiopeia) swung by the North Star as though morning would never come again. But along that line of piled-up stars, clean from horizon to horizon, an eager but hushed excitement held, as though night had never before beheld the day. Fronting the awful phenomenon of its coming, the very stars were mute and expectant. And somehow I knew that morning that even if no Perfect Being existed in fact, mankind would be forced, as some one has said, to invent one; and I saw into the hearts of the simple hillfolk and shepherds, who time after time opening their eyes thus upon the retreating night, gave of their very highest, and made the stars wide-eyed angels, finger-at-lip in pure wonder at the awful dawn.

## Appendix A

### THE ISLANDS OF THE GEORGIAN BAY

ANY map of the Great Lakes will show, east of Huron, the Georgian Bay, one hundred miles long and thirty wide; but only a very detailed map will give the islands that line its eastern and northern shores. How many there are has never been accurately determined. The general impression is thirty thousand, and perhaps this is approximate if everything above water be counted. But if trees be a mark of what constitutes an island, that number must be considerably reduced. Thousands will be left, even then; of granite rock they are, the oldest and the hardest known; and along a shore of the same material, they constitute a fringe, now filling deep basins, now almost broken by blunt points of mainland; but on the whole, of an average width of less than two miles.

How they came to be there—as far as we have

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any knowledge—is perhaps not more difficult for the layman than for the expert to understand. It was at first thought they were largely glacial in origin,—that during the ice age, the giant ice scrapers, searching implacably the weaker places, found where these islands now are the meeting and overlapping of two rock formations, and gouged out the one, leaving the harder granite knobs to be the present islands when the ice receded and the lakes formed. But it is now believed that glaciers played only a minor part. Not a scraping away of softer material by ice is the origin of this fringe of islands, but a long wearing away by other agencies even before the glacial period altogether. Over the whole of the granite plateau that stretches from the Georgian Bay to Labrador and Baffin's Land, are basins filled with water. These lakes represent spots that were softer than the surrounding granite and suffered greater erosion. Along what is now the two hundred mile fringe of islands, the same wearing took place, only here was much more weaker material; so that while inland the granite now forms the greater part of the surface and the water lies in spots where weaker formation obtained, here where the



## ISLANDS OF THE GEORGIAN BAY

weaker material abounded, the water covers a greater part of the surface and the granite sticks out as islands.

They vary in size, shape, and height. Manitoulin, at the north, is miles big; so are Hope, Beckwith, Christian, and others, at the south. But these are not typical. They are farther out in the bay, are of limestone formation, have soil, and even yet are for the most part densely wooded. The typical Georgian Bay island is granite, for the most part hugging the shore. It may contain a thousand acres or more, but this is exceptional. An island is called large when it has a hundred acres; and from this they range through all sizes down to the rock just out of water. All are comparatively low; on an average perhaps eighteen or twenty feet; very occasionally one rises to fifty feet or over. Their sides are precipitous or sloping, and the surface of one will be comparatively level while its neighbor will be rough and uneven. And every island is covered with gray lichen, save an old high-water mark—a belt clean and brown, four or five feet above the present level.

Vegetation is sparse necessarily. Few islands are densely wooded or covered with any kind of

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growth. There is no soil. But in hollows a shallow deposit has accumulated and here pines, birches, poplars, and other soft and hard woods grow. They do not thrive,—but they make a desperate effort. A white cedar, green and bushy almost as if in fat land, grows out of a rock crevice, and pines live with roots clinging to the solid rock. There is a good deal of red cedar, but for lack of nourishment it soon dies; and since the Indians had a superstitious fear of burning it, one meets the crooked body and limbs of it on nearly every island. Moss abounds. Bushes are many and various,—juniper and bearberry and blueberry. The latter bear in great quantities; in a favorable season, it is, now as in Champlain's day, an astonishment and a pleasure to see the profuseness of this fruit.

It is this vegetation, both in itself and in the sparseness of it, that gives the scenery of the Georgian Bay a peculiar attractiveness. There is none of the softness and quiet that marks islands foliaged to the water's edge. Water there is in abundance, a delight in calm or storm; foliage there is too, with all the shades and tints of green. But that gray, lichened,

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almost velvety-looking rock, itself a lasting and growing pleasure whether flat, sloping, or ruggedly precipitous, is here by far the most prominent part of the view. It shows always near the water's edge; farther up it looks out from broad spaces between foliage; often the whole face and long top of an island are almost naked rock. Sometimes a side is nothing but a heap of massive pieces of granite. And then the evidence of blasting and battering by winds are so many: scrubby bushes, bent and torn pines, tangled dead wood. Indeed the whole matter of vegetable life here becomes more and more a kind of laughing wonder. It has come up out of such great tribulation—silent struggles with an inhospitable soil, grim battles with inclement weather; and yet there it stands, giving in the winds of summer a pleasant sound and touching the gray rocks with a marvellous beauty. Only a touch, however; the rock is by far the more prominent, and with it the feeling of *lastingness* comes to be the atmosphere through which one sees these green-marked gray islands set in limpid water. It tinges every element of beauty; all the bareness and wildness, too, all the bleakness—these seem diffused in the endurance of the

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rocks. The waves have broken on them for ages; trees have rooted and grown and died—those that are shall not be; Indians as masters have gone in and out among them and are not; came Champlain, and Brébeuf, and Nicolet—these are gone,—but the rocks remain—the beauty of the islands is permeated with eternity. . . .

It is a fine playground. Even a single trip by the daily steamer that goes in part through the islands, sometimes so close it seems one could almost touch them, is highly prized. One wonders whether there is any journey quite like it on the continent. To pitch one's tent or set one's cabin among these islands for a holiday brings with it much pleasure. Surely there are no twice-breathed airs off that wide water; the bathing is excellent; and for the fisherman there are small-mouthed black bass near shore or farther out, for the more adventurous, lake trout by deep trolling, when the weather is right. But it may be said that consciously or unconsciously everyone finds in the long run a durable attraction in the islands themselves. To go about among them is always pleasant, whether by way of discovery or long after the

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channels are known. Perhaps the best craft to do this safely with, if one can stand the work, is the canoe, on account of the shallow draught; but if even with it one must watch for shoals, how much more necessary with a boat of deeper draught. Wind does not much bother one in a canoe among the islands. Now and again, though, wide points of mainland push out into the open; and here for one going the long length of the bay in this kind of boat, there is nothing for it but wait the wind's pleasure. At times these open parts are still as mill ponds. Then the four or five mile way will lie close in. It's a jagged coast, washed clean: here a back of rock with a long smooth slope; there all seamed and gutted, monstrous granitic claws, stretched forever; now low bluffs; now massive blocks;—and all by water to the eye's limit moveless as the fixed rock. At other times, one may wait days windbound, and then have to take far out an open place at dawn, the canoe on long smooth rolls, dipping and rising to the new day.

Perhaps two islands merit description, although a recent cutting of pine timber on it has made the first of these less attractive than it was—the Giant's Tomb, a couple of miles beyond



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the main fringe and in the lower part of the bay. Its formation is part granite, part limestone; and therefore not typically Georgian Bay. It is densely wooded to the water's edge; three miles long and a mile wide; but the part which takes the eye is an oval mound, a mile through at the base,—a low heavy hump of darkness on the horizon, and from every quarter the same shape. In a manner not quite to be accounted for, perhaps to some extent because of its name, this island attracts one from the beginning. Fishermen and sailors feel its influence. "There's the ole Tomb," they will say, when round a point or through a channel it breaks on them; "man, but she's black to-day." And at once there is a perceptible lowering of tone in conversation, the barest possible stilling of the spirits. They will search the sky as if to reassure themselves. . . . Its heavy shade varies with the progress of the day. In the morning, from the islands, it is a kind of purple; in the evening, deep black. The familiar experience of an object's leaping nearer overnight after rain and wind have washed and swept the world, somehow seems more impressive in the case of this island; but always, near or far, it is grave and fascinating, this mystery-touched, slightly enigmatical Giant's Tomb.

## ISLANDS OF THE GEORGIAN BAY

North Pine Island, farther up and about the same distance out in the bay, is perhaps, though in a different way, more attractive than the Giant's Tomb. Beside the latter, it is a midget of twenty acres, long and narrow and facing lengthwise the shore. Moreover, it is all granite; and, crowned with scattered pines, sits low and light along the horizon like some Japanese etching. No other of these thousands of islands has quite so beautiful a setting. Nor will the mild adventure of a visit decrease one's pleasure. For the most part, the great ellipse of granite rises from the water free and clean and sloping to fifteen feet or more, then, fairly level, runs in to the irregular patches of pine along its central depressions. Set thus in the midst of much water; well dressed, clean, and aloof, it might be called the aristocrat of the islands.

From the distance of Pine Island or even less one sees how monotonous this shore line of islands is. It is altogether uninviting, almost forbidding. One begins to wonder whether it is worth writing about. Certain it is that for the stranger too much has already been said: like any other place, it cannot fully be described; and if those who are acquainted with the

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Georgian Bay will say that much remains untold—that at least something ought to have been said about how the day's end is full on all the islands, making the quiet part far in the fringe a fantastic shadow world and the outside one radiant path into the lighted west, it must all be admitted. Perhaps no hour of the day's opulent many is enjoyed more than this evening one. But after all when one has said that the Georgian Bay playground is but a low fringe of lichenized granite islands, foliage-touched and set by limitless westering water, he has said all.

## Appendix B

### THE STORY OF THE ROCKS

O earth, what changes hast thou seen!

EVERYONE who knows the Georgian Bay, from the one who lives there to the one who makes it a flying visit on a steamer deck, is impressed by the granite rock of its shores and islands. But the impression does not, I think, issue at once in curiosity about origin; it is the attractiveness of the rock itself, even without the touch of foliage, that holds us. Its never-tiring gray and brown colors; its steely hardness to our feet; its dryness and cleanness and awful endurance,—the pleasure in these comes first. For the shores are low and unfeatured; they do not shock the mind to inquiry. Did they rise to great heights; were they all as prominent even as the Cloche Mountains on the north, wonder might arise earlier. Sooner or later, though, it does come, to everybody—this question of how it all came to be there. Maybe as one walks over it, a peculiar

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feature of the rock itself, say the banding of it in different colors for great lengths, may arouse the question. Even the casual tourist, his eyes once more on a kindlier country farther south and the beauty of his deck visit half-forgotten, suddenly remembering that for over two hundred miles from Mackinac to Minnicoganshene he has seen only granite rock, may begin to wonder how it all came to be there.

But suppose the tourist were told that this shore line of two hundred miles is only the tiny edge of a vast expanse made up of the same or similar rock! For it is even so. There are two million square miles of it, called, because of its plain-like character, the Canadian Shield. Start a bird at the Georgian Bay, let it fly east to the St. Lawrence River and then skirt the northern side of that to the sea-coast of Labrador, it would, all that one thousand mile way, look on the same foliage-patched rock one sees from the deck of the Georgian Bay steamer; on the same rock, too, it would look in a similar but much longer flight west round the upper edge of the Great Lakes to the tip of Superior, thence, keeping Lake Winnipeg on the left, almost to the far-off mouth of the Mackenzie



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River. All that whole northeast part of the American continent between Labrador and this river and down to the line of the bird's flight I have indicated constitutes roughly the Great Canadian Shield. On a depression near its centre lies the water of Hudson's Bay. Thousands of lakes and streams on it make it the finest canoeing country in the world. It has few agricultural possibilities, except for the clay belt of Ontario and Quebec; but its forests and minerals are extremely valuable, in the fall of its rivers lies power untold, and there is talk now of using the tract commercially as a source of wild-meat supply.

Here then is a vast surface of the oldest kind of rock, a surface which may be likened to the pages of an open book and which those who know the story of the earth must read for the history and nature of the Canadian Shield or of any part of it like the rock bordering on the Georgian Bay. What do they see?

As far as they have read, they see that the shield, while for the most part granite, is not at all of that material. At the southwest, it is limestone; the Thousand Islands are limestone; more interesting still, the Giant's Tomb island,

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at the foot of the Georgian Bay, is part limestone, part granite, the two formations meeting there. But that is not all: they find that the limestone is sedimentary; i.e., it was *deposited* there—was *laid on* the earth, came as it were *from above*; and that the granite was forced up out of the earth—came, in the form of molten magma, *from below*. Furthermore, starting north from the Thousand Island region, they find first pure limestone, then a rock that is a combination of limestone and granite, and finally, after a short distance, pure granite.

Scattered over the whole field, they find patches or bands of sedimentary rock, not limestone as at the south, but of other material: sandstone, quartzite, etc. Some of the bands are very long, and of unknown depths; one (rich in minerals) with an average width of fifteen or twenty miles starts from the north shore of the Georgian Bay, and runs northeast past Lake Timiskaming on out into unknown regions of Labrador. In all, there have been found—sometimes separated by great distances, sometimes overlapping—seven or eight distinguishable kinds of sedimentary rocks, resting on the basic granite, and at their edges, as in the case

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of the limestone at the south, a gradual change from the sedimentary to the basic rock through a combination of the two. These are the main facts of the shield; what is the story they tell?

Before answering the question, let us observe two things. First, to the reader of the earth, there is nothing absolutely stationary on it. Nature is always shifting things, tearing them down in one place and depositing them in another. The Mississippi River is always muddy; it is carrying very slowly the soil of many middle-western states, washed into it and its tributaries by rainfall, down to the Gulf of Mexico. This is only one way of tearing down and carrying off: sun and wind and ice also play their parts in it.

The second thing to observe is time. Ordinarily we reckon in what is known as historical time; it goes back a thousand years before Christ and then trails off into vagueness and uncertainty. But to those who read the earth's story from its surface, historical time is infinitesimal; a hundred thousand years even, is short. They go back as far as it is necessary to explain what they read. They appropriate time. Standing before a certain fact of the earth's surface and

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asking how much time is necessary to account for this fact, they simply take what is needed.

Let us give two examples, in both of which we combine the observations made above but in the first of which we look forward in time, in the other backward. The rivers of our American continent, by the process I referred to above, are carrying it slowly to the sea. Very slowly; on an average they are lowering it at the rate of a foot every nine thousand years (very rough estimate), which means that if it were possible to keep that rate up, they would reduce the continent to sea level in eighteen million years!

Now for the second example, in which time goes backward, and in which we come to a fact about the Canadian Shield. Stand on almost any part of its granite and listen to one who can read it. He will tell you that this granite was once molten hot, that because it is so coarse in texture, it must have cooled very slowly, not on the surface, but at great depths,—that we are, in fact, standing on the bared roots of once mighty mountains. They covered most of the present vast plain; they were of the hardest kind of rock—millions of cubic miles of it—and

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they are now no more! What Titanic scraper pared them thus down and how long did it take? It is almost inconceivable, but they are said to have been eaten away by the slow process of weathering and by the action of other forces on the earth's surface. It is "the most tremendous and wide spread example of leveling known in the history of the world." One is stunned when one thinks of the time required, "perhaps as long as has elapsed in all the later ages. What took place elsewhere in the world while the lofty continent of the Canadian Shield was being slowly torn to pieces, ground into dust, and pared down to the bare stumps of its mountains has not been revealed. The materials removed would suffice to build a fresh continent from the sea bottom."\* And mark you, all this in an era (the Pre-Cambrian) the earliest known, one in which there is very little record of either animal or vegetable life.

But how did those granite-rooted mountains thus torn away and pared down to the hummocky surface we now have in the Canadian Shield, and with which, in the neighborhood of

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\*A. P. Coleman—Problems of American Geology, (p. 116).



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

the Georgian Bay, the Muskoka Lakes, and other resorts, thousands of people are now familiar,—how did those mountains get there? There are two theories about the earth, but each in this case gives the same result. According to one, it is composed of a crust surrounding molten lava; by the other, it is solid, but pressure may set up such heat as to cause molten material in its interior. Take the former. If such pressure be applied to one part of the surface as to cause a depression, a concomitant bulging out will somewhere take place. Such a bulging out formed the mountains of the Canadian Shield. The pressure may have come by slow aggradation of material or it may have been accelerated by the earth's catching in its more formative period a planet from another part of the universe. By some means the continent experienced a thrust, the molten material was pushed out, the surface of the Canadian Shield was raised and folded into vast mountain ranges with great up-welling bodies of lava, especially in the axes of the folds.

It seems that during this earliest vast period of the earth's history, there were three of these foldings on the Canadian Shield, the one forming the mountains I have spoken of being the

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second and greatest. Each was succeeded by long periods of erosion (here again the second was the longest and deepest known) and preceded by periods during which the sea, no less, covered most of the shield! In each of the sea periods, new sedimentary rocks were laid down, from the nature and relative position of the patches of which now found on the shield, and from other sedimentary rock there when the story begins, the whole amazing tale itself is discovered.

I said that the rocks of the Georgian Bay as they now present themselves to the senses make a strong appeal to us. But here is something about them not so much interesting as appalling. It is something that the wildest imagination never could have conceived; it is truth infinitely stranger than fiction; it is one of nature's staggering fairy tales. One may be pardoned for quoting more of the great Victorian poet:

There rolls the deep where stood the tree.  
O earth what changes hast thou seen;  
There where the long street roars hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From pole to pole and nothing stands;  
They melt like sea the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

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There remains yet to be attempted a question which faces everyone who looks long at the rocks of the Georgian Bay: how to account for certain narrow bands there in alternating dark and light colors, sometimes straight, sometimes slightly curving, and sometimes almost rough circles; or perhaps for the presence of a single wide band—four or five feet, sometimes—of white or pink rock running here and there for longer or shorter distances.

The wide band is known as a dike. Imagine yourself a spirit, untouched by time and impervious to heat or pressure, and, at the roots of the Laurentian Mountains, before erosion had laid bare the Georgian Bay rocks as we see them to-day, a witness of events. Convulsions and thrusts are frequent, gigantic pressure crumbling rock to fragments or hot lavas pushing their way out towards the surface. At your spirit feet is a fissure made by the last hundred-thousand-year-ago convulsion; and now some mighty thrust of the earth's surface is again slowly driving the lava outwards. The surface is heaved; every fissure or weak spot in the scarcely hardened rock is jammed with this new lava. The combination of its elements is dif-



"CERTAIN NARROW BANDS  
IN ALTERNATING DARK  
AND LIGHT COLORS"





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ferent from that about it; and when it cools, the fissure at your feet now widened by the pressure of the lava, is filled with the pink rock your embodied spirit sees on the eroded surface of the Georgian Bay shore.

Or suppose your spirit feet in these depths are far from fissures or weak spots; you are on solid rock—granite; the gray and white spotted granite now so well known. Slowly but with implacable power something from beneath begins to press outward against the earth's ponderous crust, and the granite about you begins to crumble. In time it is no longer granite but a mass of crushed fragmental material. There is no let up in the pressure. The crystal fragments are of different shapes and with their first crushing there would be tiny interstices of space between them. But space in that terrible pressure is at a premium. Crystals under it are worked over and turned and elongated. Those that are fitted to go together with the greatest economy of space make their way to each other; the chemical action set up by heat plays its part; but the total effect is that the crystals assume over the area subjected to the pressure a cleavage akin to but not nearly so good as that of slate

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or mica and when the rock has hardened again, are in the position of the narrow curving bands one sees in the Georgian Bay rock.

## Appendix C

### HURONIA BY CAMP FIRE\*

Beneath the shade of the Holy Cross  
Thy children own their birth.—*O Canada.*

THE cruise, slow-moving at first, pitched its second camp at Minnicoganashene, on the outer edge of the island fringe. We were still at the bottom of the Georgian Bay. The Giant's Tomb Island was out in front of us; and stretching up towards it from the south, a ten mile strip of Ontario's mainland. Between the two, one could pick up, ten or twelve miles southwestward down the channel, a part of Christian Island.

Even though on open water, we could be at ease; the sky promised good weather. The sun was low and red, and into it ran a radiant path straight over the lake from our very feet. Night was coming in what seemed a vast, empty, and

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\*Huronía is the name of the most important mission of New France in America, that to the Huron Indians south of the Georgian Bay. In 1925 the martyrs of the Huron Mission were canonized.

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impressive world. It touched the camp to silence; and when, as the sun went over, the mellow roar of a grain barge far down the strip of mainland at the elevator moorings filled the world, it seemed to fit the day's going.

"I don't wonder at people worshipping the sun," said one at last; "and, by the same token, I believe the Indians of this neighborhood, when the French found them, were a kind of sun-worshippers—if the beggars can be said to have worshipped other than their bellies," he added grimly.

"I've been reading the Jesuit *Relations*, especially the account of their work with the Huron Indians huddled through fear of enemies on to that peninsula over there. It's gripping and powerful, that plain story. The mission began with the Récollet Friars in 1615, passed to the Jesuits in 1626, under whom it became the greatest in New France, and ended in 1650, with the almost total extermination of the Indians. And it is part of the peculiar interest of the Georgian Bay that we are now passing through the three hundredth anniversary of this effort to evangelize the Indians, at its foot. That's why I was glad to make the trip. I

## HURONIA BY CAMP FIRE

wanted to see the place where it all happened; and if distance and heroic adventure are the elements of romance, the two are here. That long-ago effort of Christianity makes one of the most thrilling stories in the annals of men. Its preachers, about thirty in all, came and worked and suffered, eight hundred miles from the few white men on the St. Lawrence, three thousand miles from home; and at least six of them in one way or other lost their lives.

“Take Father Viel, for instance—one of the Récollet martyrs. In 1623, with two others, he came to Huronia. Their little fleet of canoes went not far from where we are now. Well, the only man who could stick it was Viel—the filth and bestiality of the Indians, the privations, and all that. He stayed for two years—alone, doing what he could, learning the language chiefly; and then, unable perhaps to bear it any longer alone, off he started with the Huron trading fleet for Quebec. He never got there; at a rapid near Montreal, the Indians in his canoe, believing him a kind of Jonah to their nation, drowned him\*—deliberately pitched him in; and the

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\*So the *Relations*; but it is now held that the drowning may have been accidental.



## THE HAPPY ISLANDS

Sault-au-Récollet is the grim name of that rapid to this hour.

"You see," he went on, "the Georgian Bay was a highroad. Even before the French came, it was, what with the Hurons down this way having more corn and the Algonquins up French River way more venison, fish, and berries than each needed. But with the trade in furs, the highway was extended; there began for the Hurons that yearly journey to Quebec, the first lap of which was up the Georgian Bay. For these Indians had deadly enemies south across Lake Ontario, the fierce and adroit Iroquois—bitter and implacable enemies in a fierce family quarrel; and to avoid them, the Hurons instead of taking the shorter route by what is now the Trent River Canal system, went round by the French and Ottawa Rivers. The trade lasted until 1650, and the extent of it may be judged from the fact that in 1634 seven hundred Indians with one hundred and twenty canoes comprised the fleet that set out up the Georgian Bay highroad on the long journey of eight hundred miles.

"Along this highway came unforgettable men. In 1615, the Indians brought one of the greatest

## HURONIA BY CAMP FIRE

of the French regime in Canada, Samuel de Champlain, on the way to join his allies in the second expedition against their enemies, the Iroquois. Down this Georgian Bay (*Mer Douce*, he called it), among these islands, he crept, avoiding storms as we do now, with his fierce, proud, greedy, barbarian companions. Not a half mile from our camp, he cut across this Matchedash Bay and landed on that peninsula, rejoicing after the barren rocky way of most of the journey to find it fertile and fine. And I do not know that he ever saw the Georgian Bay again.

“Champlain was the representative of the two interests dominating French policy in Canada. The colonizer and the fur-trader spoke through him; so also did another, destined to leave an indelible mark on the Georgian Bay and through it on the world. Champlain stood also for missionary work; for France of the seventeenth century in the new world sought not only the trade in furs but also the conversion to Christianity of the native Americans. And for both of these objects it had men eminently fitted; the famous *coureurs du bois* pierced the forests to far settlements for the encouragement

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of trade, and men of strong spiritual conviction were never far behind them, to spread the kingdom of God.

“For this religious purpose, there came to the Hurons over this same route, a few weeks before Champlain, the Récollet Friar, Joseph le Caron, pioneer missionary to the Hurons, and first white man of whom there is record to see the Georgian Bay. By the same route came also, among others, Viel of whom I told you, Brébeuf the stalwart of the Jesuits, Chabanel, and Lalemant—names undying while our records are preserved and the race has continuity.

“This long journey with the Indians was one of the greatest difficulties of the missionaries. They traveled from daylight to dark on two meagre meals of sagamite. ‘It’s very dirty,’ runs the instruction to anyone making the journey; ‘but eat it from the start; it’s all too little for sustenance after you get used to it.’ With their gowns tucked for the business, forty times with loaded packs they stumbled over unimproved portages, sometimes a mile or more long; they slept hard; they endured myriad vicious mosquitoes, and their stinking Indian

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companions. And then: 'Above everything else, be cheerful,' ran the instructions that did not shy at a miracle.

"It must have been a sweet relief to make the last two days on the wide spaces of this bay—no portages and comparatively few mosquitoes. Had ever knights in the heyday of chivalry ridden so far or endured such hardships as these men, when they reached that point of land? Or undertaken a task so humanly speaking impossible as did these men when they buckled to the work of civilizing the most savage people the world has ever known. Nor was it work to be accomplished in one daring risk of high enthusiasm; those who would succeed must keep unwearied their pedestrian way.

"And these men did. Viel's death did not stop them; that was a mistaken Indian. Led by Jean Brébeuf, the Jesuits began next year their mission which lasted for twenty-four years, excepting the three when England held New France. At first the success seemed promising, but gradually it was seen that the conversions among the influential Indians were not sincere; they expected health and comfort but had little idea of changing their lives. When they saw

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this change was what was desired, their antagonism and savagery came out. The battle was on; and the stars in their courses seemed to fight against the missionaries. For not only did the Indians resist fiercely any change in their customs, but from the very beginning of the missionary effort, pestilence and famine fell on the tribes, who, egged on by the sorcerers, placed the blame on the 'black-robes.' And from that very beginning, too, the menace of the Iroquois became more and more dangerous.

"In 1640, fourteen years after Brébeuf came, there were but one hundred influential converts; and these were leading a life of unmerciful torment from their fellows. Nothing daunted, the heroic band continued their work. Aided by wealthy people in France and encouraged by the government in New France, the missionaries brought to Huronia carpenters, masons, laborers; and at what must have been great difficulty, built on the Wye River, near the present town of Midland, the fortified house of Ste. Marie (said to be the first stone building on the continent), a new centre and a home. Land was cleared and cultivated; stock was brought in; the mission became almost self-supporting, independent of help from Quebec.



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“But this fort in the wilderness, beaten upon by one end of the Georgian Bay, though of vast help in other ways, did not change the actual work of the missionaries. That went on as before. From bark-cabin churches, established in a few villages, the missionaries went forth on visits near and far, in all kinds of weather, over the Indian trails. They preached, taught, and healed in their crude way, wherever they were allowed. The cabins of the Indians were dirty, crowded, noisy, and inhospitable. If the inmates were not in time to shut the doors in a missionary’s face, they stopped their ears and covered their heads not to be bewitched by him. Often he was shown the door; one reads of fire brands being thrown and blows given by a club; and once, when an epidemic sweeping over them was blamed on him, the cry went up from the mob, ‘Murder them! Murder them!’ Midst all this walked the missionary, calm, confident, erect, undeviating, carrying in his soul the strange paradoxes of Christianity: he knew he was a coward, yet he was facing tortures unmoved; he did not deserve success, but he was expecting stupendous victories.

“And as the years of that fourth decade of the

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seventeenth century passed, slowly these victories came. Time and acquaintance were bringing missionary and savage nearer. I find a high tribute to the Indian's 'ready and vigorous eloquence, his clear-sightedness in affairs, and his discreet management in things to which he is accustomed.' And this discovery led the mission to change its tactics: it appealed to the Indian's intelligence, tried to show him the *folly* of certain things rather than their crime. Time also was showing to that naturally quick intelligence the folly of the sorcerer's own practices and of the attempt to account for the famine and pestilence by the missionary's curses. And with the mutually better understanding, the conversions began to grow, until one year numbered seventeen hundred not counting one of the strongest missions.

"But as these two were coming to a better appreciation of each other, which would soon have meant the conversion of the entire nation to Christianity, out of the South, the Iroquois menace to the very life of both was growing stronger. As early as 1642, we hear that the Iroquois are thick on the St. Lawrence, waiting to pounce upon the Huron fleet; two years

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later, he has closed every passage to Quebec by the rivers; and we read that in 1647 the Hurons did not go down at all for fear of the Iroquois. The next year, 1648, a fleet of two hundred and fifty Indians won through; and in response to a demand for help spiritual and temporal, five new missionaries go back with them, 'twenty workmen and soldiers, a heifer, and a small cannon.' It is the last fleet.

"In that year, while the fleet was gone, an Iroquois war party surprised and captured the strong, fortified village in which Father Daniel had a mission. Daniel was killed, and but few Indians escaped. The whole nation took fright: thousands fled to Manitoulin, some even farther; and when next year the two villages of St. Ignace and St. Louis were taken and Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant met death by torture, the mission was practically at an end. Of the sixteen thousand Indians, but six thousand remained; and these had taken refuge on what is now known as Christian Island. The mission burned St. Marie and followed.

"Had we been camped where we are now, we should have seen on the morning of the 15th of June, 1649, a strange craft slowly com-

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ing up the shore of that long low mainland. On a raft nearly seventy feet long was almost the whole mission—sixty-five in all,—priests, soldiers, workmen; its precious bits of livestock and stores of corn, moving to a new wilderness on Christian Island. All night it had traveled; all day we should have seen it making its slow heavy way along the mainland, far enough out for safety from bands of raging Iroquois, who from the forest looked on it with their fierce eyes. Happily it was not forced to land; the weather held good; they reached the island in safety ‘after a few days.’ There they made themselves safe in a new St. Marie, ministered for a year both physically and spiritually to the band of Indians rapidly growing less and less in number on account of famine and sickness, and then at the strong urgency of the few that remained, they all made their way to Quebec. The long effort of thirty-five years was at an end.

“The men of the mission came for the most part from noble families; they had been delicately nurtured, and some of them had all the refinement the most cultured nation of the time could give them. Jean de Brébeuf was of

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course the greatest of these, but there are others who, by their very temperaments, seem more attractive. The gentle and sensitive Father Chabanel, for example. To the Huron country on this Georgian Bay came Noel Chabanel with a burning zeal for the mission. But after nearly five years of effort, he could scarcely make himself understood by the natives; and, whether in addition to this or because of it, his soul revolted at his surroundings. Against the Indians and their ways, the food, the hard life of the outlying missions, his senses rebelled. The cabins where he had to spend his time, filled with vermin and smoke and wrangling Indians; the awaking from a hard bed to the snow's drifting around his body; the utter absence of any kind of retirement for reading or meditation—who can blame him if for all this his sensitive soul had only the utmost repugnance. Day by day, hour by hour, would flash into his mind France and home and comfort and laudable labor there in his chosen work. With all this he never asked to be relieved. On the contrary: 'I, Noel Chabanel, make a vow of perpetual stability in this Mission of the Hurons.' He would endure to the end. Two



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years later, in winter, going to the new St. Marie on Christian Island from his mission with the distant Petuns, he became separated from his men. A Huron met him later; 'and since then we have been unable to learn any news of the Father.' It was believed by the mission that the Huron Indian had murdered him. So passed his heroic soul.

"The extraordinary humility, and zeal for holiness which marked Jean de Brébeuf in the old world seemed to prove deeper and stronger in these forests of the new; from a day thronged with the distractions of the mission, he turned to the night for discipline and prayer, continued until his body succumbing, he would throw himself on the ground, with a log for a pillow, and sleep from sheer exhaustion. The son of a noble house, he took to the life of the savages with an almost natural felicity. The language that never would have come to Noel Chabanel, Brébeuf got with apparent ease; and by a favor of heaven, the whole dose of environment so repugnant to the one was taken by the other with almost a laugh. Humor, indeed, was never far from him; that '*I am an ox*' (referring to his name), his laughing reason for



"DOES HIS SPIRIT, I WONDER,  
EVER ROVE THE PLACE . . "



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always taking the heaviest and most menial tasks, shows it; even to death itself, hovering over him from the start, now face to face, now more remote, and coming at last in the hideous form of Indian torture, he turned with a grave joy. Thus endowed, no man ever sank deeper into the life of the savages; thus endowed, no man ever walked the wood, removed from them so heaven high.

“He was the master influence of the mission; by his life and by his death, he is its greatest glory. He stands there in the backward abyss of time, a towering colossal figure, so superhuman that ordinary mortals can scarcely apprehend him, we can not sympathize. The utter unworldliness of the man—he knew nor home nor tribe nor nation, only travellers to eternity; the completeness of his subjection of the body and its desires—since coming to the mission he had never sought relish in food; when a lustful woman tempted him in the forest one day, he saw her only as a demon and exorcised it by the sign of the cross, and still he wore the hair shirt and belt with steel points against the flesh; the amazing humility and courage of his soul, unruffled by insult or

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menacing hatchet; its unswerving singleness of aim—when in the torture they girdled his mouth and tore off his lips, even then he continued to preach consolation to his people, and to pray forgiveness for his enemies until these cut out his heart;—looking at him there standing thus colossally, he inspires in us only wonder and awe; never pity, never despair: of such greatness, we say, is our humanity capable under the inspiration of an idea.

“Does his spirit, I wonder, ever rove the place where it toiled and suffered? If so, do the great material changes hold its ghostly attention—the tall elevators near the little Wye River and the mellow roar of the grain barges coming to their moorings at a city’s feet? Not for long. Sensitive as ever to the questions of life and death, it will turn to the cross he planted three hundred years ago, and see again the mystic rites and hear again the mystic words that minister to man not so much as the proud subduer of earth and air and sea, but as the brief traveler between eternal twilights.”









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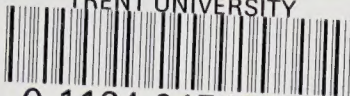
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